FT MEADE
GenColl

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. 35 Copyright No.

Shelf RZ3 .M77T2

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

VOL. I. No. 13. ISSUED WEEKLY. AUG. 2, 1888.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, $25.00 PER YEAR.

SUNSHINE SERIES

CASSELL'S of CHOICE FICTION.

No. 13.

THE TRAGEDY OF BRINKWATER

BY

MARTHA LIVINGSTON MOODEY

—o—

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED
PARIS LONDON NEW YORK
PUBLISHERS

104 & 106 FOURTH AVE.
NEW YORK.

COPYRIGHT 1888 BY O. M. DUNHAM.

Entered at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., as Second Class Matter, May 11, 1888.

COPYRIGHT.

"UNEASY RESTS THE HEAD

that wears a crown," unless it's polished with

SAPOLIO.

It is a solid cake of Scouring Soap. Try it in your next house cleaning.

Even a king can secure cheap comfort and easy relief from the cares of house-cleaning by the investment of a few cents in a cake of Sapolio. With it wonders can be accomplished in cleaning and scouring, for which purposes it has no equal. "Dirt defies the King," but it abdicates wherever Sapolio makes its appearance and quickly, too. Try a cake.

No. 35.

THE TRAGEDY OF BRINKWATER

A NOVEL

BY

MARTHA LIVINGSTON MOODEY

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
COPYRIGHT
MAR 20 1889
8903
WASHINGTON.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED
104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

PZ3
M777
2

COPYRIGHT,

1887,

BY O. M. DUNHAM.

All rights reserved.

Press of W. L. Mershon & Co.,

Rahway, N. J.

TO

ALICE WELLINGTON ROLLINS.

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

CHAPTER I.

BRINKWATER FOLK, ... 9

CHAPTER II.

THE RETURN OF THE HEIR, ... 15

CHAPTER III.

THE TRAGEDY, ... 30

CHAPTER IV.

THE INQUEST, ... 34

CHAPTER V.

AT THE PRISON, ... 45

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHERIFF OF MARSHMEADOWS, . . 54

CHAPTER VII.

A NIGHT VISIT, ... 73

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT THE SHERIFF DISCOVERED, . . 89

PAGE.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MEETING OF THE PRISONERS, . . 102

CHAPTER X.

THE TEMPTATION, ... 111

CHAPTER XI.

THE CLEW, ... 117

CHAPTER XII.

THE RETURN OF THE FUGITIVE, . . 130

CHAPTER XIII.

MOTHER AND SON, ... 140

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WILL, ... 150

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRIAL, ... 159

CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER THE TRIAL, ... 174

CHAPTER XVII.

ERNEST'S DREAM, ... 180

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MEETING IN THE CELL, . . . 186

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GALLOWS, ... 192

PAGE.

CHAPTER XX.

THE HEARING, ... 200

CHAPTER XXI.

AT THE LAWYER'S, ... 210

CHAPTER XXII.

A DEATH-BED CONFESSION, ... 214

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MARRIAGE AND REPRIEVE, . . . 231

THE TRAGEDY OF BRINKWATER.

CHAPTER I.

BRINKWATER FOLK.

THE village of Brinkwater took its name from the Farrell estate, which was situated on the borders of a small lake that had an outlet through the marshes of Claire County. It lay in the lap of a soft, peaceful landscape, embosomed in drooping trees, and consisted of a few rustic streets that straggled off from the village-green and ended in the village church-yard.

The family of Farrell, which originally consisted of Andrew, Agnes his wife, by a second marriage, and two sons, half-brothers, was now diminished by the death of Andrew Farrell and the withdrawal of Joseph from the roof of his step-mother, leaving Mrs. Farrell and Ernest the sole occupants of the homestead, which, lifted on an eminence, was the most pretentious house in the neighborhood, dominating the whole landscape with its turreted and gabled roof, and standing like a feudal chief in the midst of his humble retainers.

The community of Brinkwater had been greatly

excited over the character of the will left by the late Andrew Farrell, which gave his large estate to the elder son, the only conditions being an allowance to the younger son, the amount of which was left entirely to the discretion of the heir, and the reversion of the estate to Ernest Farrell in case his elder brother died without issue. Mrs. Farrell had accepted an ante-nuptial settlement which barred her right to any further claim on the estate. The mother and step-son had been antagonistic from the first. Joseph Farrell, being of an exceedingly selfish disposition and miserly by nature, had resented his father's second marriage. He thought the beautiful young girl who had brought no portion would be likely to bring a numerous family to share the inheritance, and from the moment of the birth of Mrs. Farrell's son, Joseph Farrell had made her life a burden. Young, beautiful, ambitious, she had hoped to shine and reign; but she had found her dream a delusion. Joseph Farrell thwarted her at every step. His influence with his father being unbounded, Joseph became her real master. The settlement, made upon her before her marriage, though seeming large to her inexperienced youth, and her poverty, was really very small, and when later she discovered this fact, she never doubted that her husband's sense of justice would make on his demise a suitable allowance to the mother of his child. That her son would be left to the mercy of his half-brother she had never imagined; and no one was more astonished and indignant at the con-

ditions of the will than Agnes Farrell herself. Her first impulse was to contest the will and appeal to the justice of the law, but she soon found that the law is more concerned with precedent than with justice, and that Andrew Farrell had a perfect right to do with his own as he pleased. The conditions of the will had naturally widened the breach between the step-mother and her step-son, and made a residence under the same roof no longer desirable, nor indeed possible. Joseph Farrell set up an establishment in New York and became known in club circles as a *bon vivant* and man of fashion : at this juncture he was daily expected to return and carry out the provisions of his father's will. The current of public sympathy ran all in favor of the younger brother ; he was a favorite in the community, where his goodness, beauty and grace were the pride of the whole village. His friendship and good-will were as spontaneous and impartial as the shining sun ; and his ready sympathy for all sorrow and distress was genuine and helpful. He was attached to the people and the soil ; he was one of themselves, and purposed to make his home at Brinkwater ; while the elder brother, an alien and an absentee, scarcely veiled his contempt under a show of civility for their homely, country ways.

Mrs. Farrell had never shared in the affection her son's character inspired. She was known to be pious, just, charitable and sternly truthful ; but she was proud, reserved and haughty. All evil-doers, both great and small, were withered by her scorn ;

she never forgave an injury ; she was exacting to the uttermost farthing ; but her friendship once won, never decayed ; her gratitude enlisted, she never forgot. She had a tall, splendid figure, with abundant black hair, and dark eyes that blazed or swam, as the mood swayed her : a Roman presence, with the spirit and will of a Roman matron ; a few loved, many feared, but all admired her.

The wealth, beauty and magnificence of the Farrells had been the common property of which Brinkwater was proud and made its boast ; a high-day and holiday thing, for which they watched and waited as each Sunday brought around the pageant of the Farrell equipage ; when men, women, and children ranged themselves at the church door to see the stately black-haired Agnes descend from her luxurious carriage, assisted by her son, and sweep with her silken draperies into the little church to worship the same Creator that they worshiped. And somehow, though unacknowledged to themselves, her superiority conferred a distinction on the worship and added a reflected glory to their humble aspirations.

Martha Blunt, the only servant the present straitened circumstances of Mrs. Farrell allowed her, had dwelt in the family as friend and domestic for twenty-five years. There had been a rumor, many years before, that the natural idiot son of the housekeeper was half-brother to Joseph and Ernest Farrell, though there seemed to be no foundation for the story except that furnished by the mystery

of his paternity ; yet many people fancied they saw in the hue of complexion and hair of the idiot signs of consanguinity to the Farrell brothers.

In the family dissensions, Martha Blunt, though taking the part of peacemaker, was always in sympathy with Agnes Farrell, who had been a kind and liberal mistress to her, and had won the housekeeper's heart by her thoughtful kindness to her idiot son, which had been in strong contrast to Joseph Farrell's brutal aversion to the unfortunate boy.

Every body in the village knew of the betrothal of Ernest Farrell and Virgin Grey ; there had been no attempt at concealment, indeed, for from the day of their engagement Miss Grey had been a frequent visitor at the house of Mrs. Farrell. She had often been seen in the village, and on Sundays occupied, with meek and reverent grace, a seat in the family pew.

Many pretty pictures of the wandering lovers had been seen by the villagers under the Farrell elms, and beside the lake of Brinkwater ; the whole community was interested in this tender idyl, and watched it with curious, sympathizing eyes. Virgin Grey was a slender, graceful girl, of the delicate lily type, who had passed her twentieth year, but her modest, half shy bearing and blonde beauty made her pass for a much younger woman. The chief beauty of her face was in its expression ; so mild and tender, almost pathetic, it seemed as if the shadow of a great sorrow veiled its winsome

brightness. With friends she was frank and artless, with a sweet, caressing manner that won affection from the outset ; but an intimate acquaintance with her revealed a strength of character and maturity of judgment not suspected by a superficial observer. She was an orphan, the ward of an uncle by marriage, Benedict Strong, an attorney in Marshmeadows, the neighboring county town, who lived far beyond the income the practice of his profession yielded, and being yet a young man, had sought and been elected to the office of prosecutor for the state, in the hope of being brought into professional prominence. He was, essentially, a criminal lawyer and loved the work as the hound loves the chase.

The engagement of young Farrell and the niece of Benedict Strong had existed since before the death of Andrew Farrell ; consequently before the conditions of the will were disclosed ; but from the moment it became known to the wily attorney that the estate had been left away from Ernest, his strenuous opposition to the marriage of his niece had begun. There had been instant revolt on the part of Virgin, and she declared her determination to act in the matter as her heart and judgment dictated. The events which quickly followed caused her withdrawal from his roof, and a serviceable friend was turned into a subtle enemy.

CHAPTER II.

THE RETURN OF THE HEIR.

AT the close of a hot, dusty summer day, a handsome traveling barouche stopped at the door of Brinkwater Tavern. Although the turfy streets yielded scarcely a sound to the rolling wheels of the great barouche, every door and window bore a witness to its splendor, and all the village idlers and children ran out with fragments of their unfinished evening meal adhering to lips and fingers, lest, like the famous coach of Cinderella, the barouche should resolve itself into a common pumpkin, and cheat them of an unwonted spectacle.

A stout, self-important man leisurely alighted, dressed from his shining hat to his polished boots in the very extreme of fashion, and seeming to dwarf every object by his magnificent superiority. The bustling landlady instinctively clapped her palms to her frowzy head and switched her apron across the chair she placed before him ; the next moment she vanished, and on her way to make a more elaborate toilet, informed the cook and hostler in an awestruck whisper, that " Joseph Farrell had come back, looking as big and handsome as a new painted stage-coach." The crack of the kitchen

door disclosed to the curious eyes of the peeping pair, a robust, middle-aged gentleman, rosy, with blonde, curling hair and beard, sparkling brown eyes and a Roman nose. He wore a suit of rich blue cloth, and dazzling linen ; the white hand he drew across his broad forehead was adorned with a diamond ring, that, as the hostler declared, " made the sun wink," while the great seal that dangled from his watch-fob, played hide and seek with the evening light.

" I don't know what you're going to give him for supper," said Serepta Jocelyn, the cook ; " looks as if he had fed on whale. I reckon we can't do better'n our best though."

" Well, git out the chaney, and silver spuns, and put yer best foot foremost, Serepty, I guess the March rooster'll hev to do," said the landlady, now resplendent in her Sunday gown and cap.

The object of all this harmless interest, though intensely conscious of the commotion his appearance in the village had excited, leisurely ate the hasty meal the resources of the inn provided, with the serene and meditative air of a man on good terms with himself, and at peace with all the world. " He chews his victuals like they was the curd of human kindness," said Serepta, as she turned from the door-crack to watch the cakes browning on the griddle ; " he's as condescendin' with the cream as if it was only chalk and water ; fur my part, I hate city folks' ways." When Joseph Farrell had finished supper, he told the landlord, who had returned in

time to make a reconnoissance through the door-crack, and enter with a scraping bow, that he had a business engagement with Mrs. Farrell and her son, that evening, but he would return to the tavern for the night, ordering the best lodgings the house afforded. The landlord and his wife waited long for their guest, but as he did not appear at midnight, they naturally concluded that the violent storm which had set in late in the evening had detained him, and its continuance had compelled him to spend the night under the roof of his step-mother.

Mrs. Farrell had invited her step-son to remain with her during his brief visit, but as he had declined the courtesy, he was not expected to tea, and when Ernest met his brother at the hall-door he ushered him at once into the library, where Mrs. Farrell awaited him. It was evident from the first moment that the visit was to be a purely business one ; the chilling reserve of Agnes Farrell, the embarassment that Ernest could not conceal, the half-defiant air of one who had an advantage which Joseph Farrell showed, made it at once apparent that the civilities between them were enforced and that the meeting was to be one of armed truce. There seemed to be some difficulty in approaching the subject to be discussed. Mrs. Farrell would make no advance. Ernest awaited his brother's movements, and Joseph at last said : "You are aware of the nature of my errand here, Mrs. Farrell ?"

"Yes."

"I suppose you have made your arrangements in accordance with the change in your circumstances?"

"I have made no arrangements."

"My mother and myself have been awaiting the settlement of the estate," said Ernest.

"The estate is *settled*," replied Joseph Farrell with emphasis.

"I believe it was the intention of my father to grant me a suitable allowance," said Ernest with dignity.

"What do you consider a suitable allowance, pray?"

It was Mrs. Farrell who answered in a tone that trembled with suppressed agitation, "Something between the costly luxuries of life and the bare necessaries."

The rosy face of Joseph Farrell flushed to an angry crimson.

"The question of an allowance to my half-brother is not between you and me, but between him and me, Mrs. Farrell."

"Whatever concerns his welfare concerns mine," she said.

"You accepted an ante-nuptial settlement, I believe?"

"I did, but I was young and ignorant, and unused to business transactions then."

"You mean to imply that my father took advantage of your youth and ignorance, do you?" the man's tone was intolerable.

"Let us waive a discussion of this part of the subject, and come to the business to be settled between us at once," said Ernest excitedly, pausing in his restless promenade in front of his brother. "May I ask what you consider a suitable allowance for me?"

"I know very well what my father thought a sufficiently large allowance for me, at your age," was the answer.

"You were sheltered, clothed, and fed at his expense, at the same time," said Agnes Farrell.

"The *law* has settled all questions pertaining to this matter, between you and me, madam," replied the step-son with an angry snarl.

"Mother, leave this discussion to me, I beg," said Ernest, gently. "Your interference will only provoke insolence, and I can not restrain myself if it goes too far."

Joseph laughed loud and coarsely. There was a whispered conference between Ernest Farrell and his mother, but she refused his entreaty to leave the room.

"I have no time to waste on sentiment," interrupted the elder brother impatiently. "A storm threatens and I must return to Brinkwater before it bursts."

"The business is in your own hands, you can do as you please, I suppose. I will not condescend to beg where I have a right to share," said Ernest.

"It would avail you nothing to beg; on the sub-

ject of your rights the will is explicit ; my mind is made up, and I am not a man to change it."

" For the better, no, indeed," interposed Agnes. " If your father in his infirmity had not been unduly influenced, he would not have made so cruel and unjust a will." Joseph turned his back deliberately upon his step-mother and answered nothing.

" Speak what is in your mind at once," said Ernest, " and let this disgraceful business come to an end." He took his stand beside his mother, and left Joseph Farrell staring blankly at the wall, who, turning quickly in his chair, faced the mother and son defiantly. " You are twenty-six years old," he burst out, addressing Ernest ; " you are young, strong, and have remarkable ability ; you have had thousands of dollars expended on your education, and you ought by this time to have acquired knowledge enough of some kind to aid you in earning a living. You have no one but yourself to care for ; I ignore, you see, the possibility of your intended beggarly marriage. I consider a monthly allowance of fifty dollars as sufficient to cover all the requirements of the will."

Amazement and indignation for the moment held Ernest Farrell speechless.

Agnes Farrell's wrathful protest was unheard in a tremendous explosion of thunder, for the brooding storm had burst at last with terrible fury ; torrents of rain poured down, accompanied by peals of thunder and vivid lightning. Joseph Farrell walked to the front window and looked out

upon the storm; a blaze of blinding lightning sheeted the glass against which his figure stood out like a picture.

"If heaven would but strike him where he stands!" was the involuntary thought of Agnes Farrell. He turned at last and approached his young brother. "I am shortly to be married," he said, "and go abroad to live. My affianced wife is a woman without fortune, who has been, however, brought up in luxury. I shall have no more than I need to live in the style I mean to maintain as a married man." He hesitated as though expecting a reply, and waiting in vain, he added, "Your exceptionally good looks ought to bring you a wife with a handsome dower." The sting of this was in the fact that Joseph knew of his brother's engagement to a girl without fortune.

"I do not propose to barter what you are pleased to call my good looks, for a rich wife, and you will be good enough not to trouble yourself with conjectures about my future."

"I don't intend to trouble myself about your future," replied Joseph, brutally. "When will you and your mother be ready to give up possession of this property?"

"Do you mean to rent Brinkwater?" asked Agnes Farrell, in astonishment.

"I do."

"Does your intention embrace the homestead?"

"It does."

"Then you literally turn us out of house and home?"

"*My* house and home, madam."

"But one you have no need of, which you do not intend to use, and to which I am strongly attached."

"We can not always have the things to which we are strongly attached."

"I am ready to pay you for the use of it."

"I prefer to choose my tenants; Brinkwater is already rented."

"Controversy with this man is useless, mother; we are powerless; but we are not yet beggars; let us maintain our dignity, at least," said Ernest.

"There is very little dignity in poverty, Ernest," sighed Agnes; "but I am rich in possessing you," she added in a whisper.

The fury of the storm continued; there seemed no prospect of abatement. It was a good mile by the highway to the village. Joseph Farrell had walked, unaccompanied, the nearest way across the pleasant fields, expecting to return to Brinkwater before dark. He went to the front door and looked out; the darkness was impenetrable and the wind-beaten rain descended in torrents. For reasons, best known to himself, Joseph Farrell was a timid man after night. His residence in the great city had made him suspicious of his fellow-man; his valuable trinkets, which had been noticed and admired in the village, might excite the cupidity of some night-prowler, who, favored by the darkness,

would not hesitate to waylay and rob him. Apart from the storm, then, there was a good reason why he should not venture abroad at so late an hour.

"There is no prospect of my getting away to-night," he said angrily, on returning to the room. "A fish could hardly live in such a storm."

"There is no reason why you should go," replied Ernest. The instinct of hospitality, which he had inherited from his mother, was very strong in him. "Besides, this is virtually your own home; my mother and I invite and expect you to stay;" he looked toward his mother as he spoke.

"The change in my circumstances has made it necessary to dispense with my horses and servants, else, as you wish to go, I would offer you a conduct through the storm; but I join my son in inviting you to pass the remainder of the night with us. You are welcome to the shelter as long as it is mine to offer," she added, bitterly.

"I was a fool to walk over unattended," replied Joseph Farrell; "but I must stay, perforce, there is no help for it now. I told the people at the inn I would come back, but they can not expect me in such an infernal storm as this."

The brothers went up the great old-fashioned stairway together, Joseph Farrell acknowledging the stately inclination of Agnes Farrell with a curt bow. She watched them as they went up side by side; the sensual features of the elder man contrasting strongly with the refined beauty of her own son.

"Heaven has been cruel to us," she sighed, as she took up her candle and ascended by a private stairway to her own bedroom.

"I suppose we may consider this business settled?" said Joseph Farrell, when the brothers had reached the door of the guest-chamber. He spoke in the assured tone of one who, as far as he was concerned, had disposed of a disagreeable duty.

"I have no choice," said Ernest.

"You have *this* choice: you can accept or decline."

Released from the restraint his mother's presence had imposed, Ernest Farrell gave way to the passion of anger that consumed him. If the blood of the bully that flowed in Joseph's veins had tainted his own he would have struck him where he stood; but he could not forget that this man was his brother, his guest, and his father's lawful heir. He was simply acting out his brute-nature. Ernest could not descend to meet him on his own level. Pale with wrath, his voice husky with the restraint he put upon himself, he told his half-brother in a few, sharp, bitter words, that his conduct was unnatural and cruel; for himself he asked nothing; but to his mother some luxuries had become a necessity, and he was willing to mortgage his future claim on the estate if, during her life-time, Joseph Farrell would give a lease on the homestead to his mother.

"The arrangement is simply impossible; I have

already leased Brinkwater to my prospective wife's father."

"Can't the arrangement be set aside?" asked Ernest.

"I see no reason for setting it aside," replied Joseph.

"So you are determined to drive my mother from the only home she ever owned or loved?"

"Her so-called ownership expired with my father's life."

"Look at it in this light," cried Ernest, excitedly; "if your wife should be left a childless widow and *I* become the heir-at-law, your example might bear as bitter fruit as that you offer to my mother."

"In *any* event my wife will be provided for, and I repeat your own warning not to meddle with my future or that of my proposed wife." His face was livid with rage.

"I will live to see this wrong righted," were Ernest Farrell's last words, as his brother closed the door in wrath upon him.

* * * * * *

Alone in her chamber, Agnes Farrell gave way to a transport of tears. The visit of Joseph Farrell from which she had hoped so much, in spite of her knowledge of the man's character had yielded only bitterness and despair. She reviewed the long, sad story of her wrongs; her early, and loveless marriage; the antagonism of her step-son; her husband's unjust and cruel will, and now this en-

forced exile from the beautiful home, of which she had so long been mistress, to seek a shelter where she could ; and most bitter of all, the overthrow of Ernest's hopes and the indefinite postponement of his marriage. She railed against the law ; against her dead husband ; against her step-son. Her imperious spirit could not brook the indignity of her position ; to be turned out virtually penniless upon the world, to come down to the poverty of her youth, with all the wretched past behind her, and to face a wretched future, was intolerable. Her whole life had been wasted in grasping at a bauble, which at last had eluded her reach, and through no fault of his, her son was involved in her ruin. She went to her bed a desperate woman. Sleep was impossible ; in vain she strove to gain composure : her temples throbbed, her heart swelled as though it would burst. She sought to fix her wandering attention on some one object ; her eyes fell upon a yellow silk dressing-gown of Ernest's that hung on a chair at her bedside ; she tried to hold it in her mind to the exclusion of every thing else ; she counted the buttons down the front, backwards and forwards ; she noticed every detail of the garment from the crumpled cambric handkerchief, with her initials in the corner, which dangled from the pocket, to the silken cord that trailed upon the floor ; then her thoughts wandered to a picture of the housekeeper's idiot son flying through the park in the purloined garment, pursued, and captured by his mother, his leering look of triumph as

he darted aside and eluded her : the association of ideas was endless, and, wearied with her efforts to induce sleep, she rose and saturated a napkin from a bottle of chloroform that had its place on her dressing-table : under its soothing influence she was just dropping into a grateful sleep when the entrance of Ernest aroused her. He took off his coat, replaced it with the dressing-gown, and sat down at the bedside to talk over with his mother the distressing events of the evening. There was nothing to be said that could alter the case ; they knew the matter was settled, as far as Joseph Farrell was concerned, and that resistance was useless. "Nothing but his death can help us," sighed Agnes.

"Unless he comes to a violent end, he seems likely to outlive us both, mother," replied Ernest, "and his marriage, if it bring issue, bars me forever from inheritance of the estate."

"Oh, that he would die to-night," she moaned. "He will be overtaken by some just punishment, for his hardness and cruelty, I do believe."

"It is of you, mother, and Virgin, I think," continued the young man ; "for myself I ask nothing, and should scorn the pitiful sum he offers ; but small as it is, it will eke out your meager income, and Virgin will wait, I know, until I am able to offer her a home of my own making."

"What little there is, is yours and hers, Ernest," replied his mother ; "we can at least share our poverty, my love."

She seemed utterly spent and weary, and looked so pale and worn, that Ernest, thinking sleep the best restorer, bade her good-night, extinguished the lamp, and leaving the dressing-gown on the chair where he had found it, went directly to his own room.

After her son had left her, Mrs. Farrell, through complete prostration, fell into a deep sleep, from which she was aroused with a feeling of suffocation ; with an effort she raised her heavy eyelids, and a flash of lightning from the spent storm revealed the figure of Ernest near the bedside, clothed in the yellow dressing-gown, his back turned toward her, and holding in his upraised hand the bottle of chloroform. In an instant all was dark again.

She had an impulse to speak to him, but, as though under the influence of a nightmare, could utter no sound ; the next moment she lapsed into a heavy sleep, from which, long afterward, it seemed to her, she awakened suddenly with a feeling of alarm, and springing up in bed strove to throw off the lethargy that bound her faculties. Hearing a slight rustling sound outside, she rose and went into the hall, and was surprised to find the hall lamp dimly burning, which was explained, however, when she saw, on looking over the banisters, her son near the foot of the stairway : a towel stained with blood pressed against his temples, concealing his face up to the roots of his hair ; blood was trickling down the front of the

dressing-gown, also. Thinking he was suffering from bleeding of the nose, to which after any great excitement he was often subject, she leaned over the banisters and essayed to call him, but she felt heavy and drowsy, and she remembered that her voice sounded, in her own ears, faint and remote ; that Ernest kept on his way and did not answer her. The next moment she was seized with a feeling of vertigo, and fearing to fall, she tottered back to her bed.

In the clear light of the morning, Mrs. Farrell recalled the events of the night, as the phantoms of a distressing dream, inspired by the excitement of the evening before, and dismissed the subject as trivial and unimportant.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRAGEDY.

ON the morning of June twentieth, Joseph Farrell was found murdered in his bed at Brinkwater Heights.

This was the awful news that reached the village of Brinkwater on that beautiful morning. The earth was redolent with summer glory and sweetness; the heavens smiled; the birds sang; the breeze lifted the leaves and curled the water; the children played in the street; but as the horrid tidings flew from mouth to mouth, there fell a shadow on the summer air; every human face in Brinkwater was awe-stricken, and the laughter and play of the children was stilled. All work was stopped; men and women, collected in groups, with little children huddling close, talked of the awful deed. That a murder had been committed in their innocent community dropped upon them like a bolt from a cloudless sky.

The man had not a known enemy in the place: there had, it seemed, been no attempt at housebreaking, or robbery, and no footsteps had brushed the morning dew from the lawn. Whoever com-

mitted the murder had been locked that night in the house with the victim. No one but Agnes Farrell and her son could profit by the taking-off of the heir of Brinkwater. Who could have done the deed but an aggrieved and wronged enemy? Who was wronged and aggrieved but Agnes Farrell and her son? The conclusion was evident that one, or both, of these interested people had committed the murder.

Still it was incredible! Men must see and touch this bloody horror ere they could believe in its truth. And that of all their number Agnes Farrell and her son should be the accused!

Public opinion unanimously strove to exonerate Ernest Farrell. No one would, no one could, for one moment, believe that this bright, beautiful, loving youth, who had grown to manhood in their midst, could find it in his heart to harm a living thing. How many kindly acts, accepted once as matters of course, but recalled now with a new significance, were remembered to his advantage! No, it was impossible that Ernest Farrell could have had a hand in the murder of his brother.

Opinion was divided about Mrs. Farrell's connection with the crime. Womankind in Brinkwater, as far as heard from on the street, were against her to a woman; men were willing to give her the benefit of a doubt and to await an investigation. But the fact that Agnes Farrell had sold herself for money, as it was said, that the money had been left away from her and her cherished son, seemed a sufficient

motive, in the absence of any other motive, for the commission of the crime.

The question of Martha Blunt's probable connection with the murder was also discussed ; but it was known she had been summoned, early in the evening, to the bedside of a sick relative, where she had passed the night, leaving Ernest Farrell and his mother alone in the house with their guest. It was clearly impossible, then, for the Brinkwater mind to come to any satisfactory conclusion. Mrs. Farrell, and all her belongings, had occupied so high a place in public esteem that she could not be judged by an ordinary standard ; that this woman, who seemed so far above the reach of circumstance could be dragged down from her high eminence, to the level of the vilest criminal, was too monstrous for belief. Their moral sense had received a shock from which it would take long to recover ; they had been in a manner defrauded, and there was a sense of loss that was personal to every man, woman and child in the village.

If it excelled in any thing, Brinkwater excelled in virtue, and as a law-abiding, religious community it was known throughout the country-side. No criminal had ever been bred in its borders, and the ruthless arm of the law had never ravished a single member from this peaceful fold.

'Tis true they had their little feuds in church and state, but antagonism never ventured beyond controversy, and so great was the trust of each man in his brother that all lay down at night with

unbarred doors, in the consciousness of absolute safety. The crime of murder was so monstrous, and to their apprehension so unusual, that the discussion of it assumed the figure of a circle around which horror, mystery, and suspense held an equal adjustment.

Exaggerated rumors kept the public pulse at fever heat. Stories to the effect that Mrs. Farrell had taken her life ; that Ernest Farrell had disappeared ; that, after all, Joseph Farrell had only committed suicide, filled the air. But as the day wore on the true story was unfolded in all its simple horror ; the house, with its ghastly secret, was in the possession of the law, and Agnes Farrell and her son were given over to be held for the awful crime of murder.

The summer air was heavy with the tragedy ; the creeping terror of a murder chilled the evening breeze, curdled the blood, and oppressed the hearts of the innocent dwellers of Brinkwater. Night fell with an added awe, and in its black shadow, as under a sheltering wing, men lay down to sleep, perchance to dream of murder.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INQUEST.

THE coroner was summoned, a jury impaneled, and an investigation into the murder of Joseph Farrell begun without delay.

Martha Blunt, Mrs. Farrell's housekeeper, was the first witness examined, and testified under oath :

" On the evening of June twentieth, Joseph Farrell, bachelor, aged forty-five, by arrangement with his step-mother, Agnes Farrell, and his half-brother, Ernest, visited the house at about seven o'clock in the evening. He declined supper, having supped at Brinkwater Tavern where he expected to return for the night, but the heavy storm that came up before the business between them was over prevented his return and he stayed all night at Brinkwater Heights, occupying the spare room, situated in the north-east corner of the second story. There had been a dispute in the library, part of which I overheard, in regard to the will of Andrew Farrell. Joseph Farrell was very insulting, and Ernest and his mother were very angry. I had been sent for to spend the night at the bedside of a sick relative,

and after getting leave from Mrs. Farrell, I locked up the house securely, as was my nightly duty, and went out by the rear door ; the key of which I always carried, and of which I was very careful, wearing it on my person, as I knew the property of my mistress was at the mercy of the finder of it. On returning early in the morning I found the house closed as I had left it, the family not yet risen. I got breakfast ready, but no one answering the rising bell, I went up stairs to speak to Mrs. Farrell. I was surprised to find the upper hall lamp burning. I heard the milkman's ring, and went down without having seen my mistress, though I knew she was awake, as she spoke to me from her room. When the breakfast bell rang, Mrs. Farrell and Ernest came down, the former looking very pale, and saying she had passed a bad night. Ernest Farrell seemed about as usual, though somewhat depressed, I thought. Having waited a reasonable time for the appearance of Joseph Farrell, breakfast was ordered to be served, and I went up stairs at the request of Mrs. Farrell to call her step-son. I knocked on his door, but getting no response, I supposed he had risen and gone out early. After doing up my work below stairs, I went above to put the chambers in order for the day. I went to Ernest Farrell's room first, taking a change of bed-linen with me, as Mrs. Farrell told me he had had the nose-bleed in the night. I found the upper sheet and the pillow-cover stained with blood ; but this being nothing uncommon I changed the bed with-

out thinking any thing wrong. I found the door of Joseph Farrell's room still locked from the hall entrance, and then went round to the ante-room door, which was closed, but had the key, I noticed, on the outside. I went into the room and found the shutters wide open ; a lamp was burning on the table, which I turned out. A suit of men's clothes hung on a high-backed chair at the bedside, and seeing that Joseph Farrell had not risen, and did not awake at the sound of my entrance, I went out quickly, picking up as I went out a blood-stained handkerchief, that I knew by the initials in the corner belonged to Mrs. Farrell. I associated it with Ernest, who had conducted his brother to his room, and I carried it to Mrs. Farrell, whom I found hunting about her room for the yellow silk dressing-gown of her son, which was missing. I helped her search for it, but we did not find it. I went down stairs again, and in cleaning about the back door, I saw in the brighter morning light what I had not noticed before, the print of bloody fingers on the inside knob ; then for the first time, a horrible suspicion of foul play crossed my mind. I went up stairs trembling so that I had to hold to the banister for support. I found Mrs. Farrell walking back and forth in the front hall. We were alone in the house, Ernest Farrell having gone to the village to look for his brother. Mrs. Farrell saw my agitation, and catching me by both hands, begged me for God's sake to tell her what was the matter. I told her what I had seen, and what I be-

lieved, she tottered to the hall sofa and sank upon it. I thought she was going to faint, and fanned her with my apron. 'Where is Ernest?' she gasped. I told her he had gone to look for Joseph Farrell. She started up from the sofa, and was going down stairs, when, fearing she would fall, she seemed so shaken, I supported her on one side, and she caught hold of the banister with the other hand. 'I believed it was a dream,' she whispered under her breath. I did not ask her what she meant, for we were both wild with apprehension and terror. I led my mistress toward the library, that being the room nearest the stair-way, but she pointed to the breakfast-room, and just as we crossed the threshold she fell to the floor in a dead faint. I opened her dress for air, and saw she had the handkerchief I had found tucked in her bosom. Hearing Ernest's footsteps I called to him to come to my help. She revived a little when we laid her on the sofa, but she resisted our intention to carry her to her chamber, so we concluded to move her to the drawing-room, where we made her as comfortable as we could on the great divan. Ernest Farrell did not stop to ask any questions, being very much alarmed, but went in great haste to the village for the family physician. I was terribly frightened on being left alone, for I thought Mrs. Farrell was dying; she was deathly pale, cold, rigid and speechless; her eyes were open, but she did not appear to see, and I begged her in vain to speak to me. After what seemed to me to be a

long time, Ernest Farrell came back with the doctor. It was some time before we could get Mrs. Farrell to swallow any thing, but soon after the medicine began to act: when she regained her speech, her first words were, 'Oh, why did you not let me die!' The doctor ordered warmth and quiet, and as soon as I could get a chance I told Ernest Farrell of the awful suspicions that had brought about his mother's alarming condition. He was dreadfully shocked at what I told him, and went immediately to the doctor, and repeated what I had said. They talked apart for a short time and then went up together to the room where Joseph Farrell had passed the night, and found him with his throat cut from ear to ear."

The long and garrulous testimony of the housekeeper was not interrupted. The woman was evidently telling the truth in a perfectly straightforward manner, with intelligence, but unconscious of its gravity. The truth was what the officers of the law wanted, and the onerous duty of the investigation of a murder-case being new to them, and the evidence being wholly circumstantial, it was deemed of the greatest importance to take cognizance of the most trivial fact. The testimony of her housekeeper, which tended to criminate Agnes Farrell and her son, was given by the woman in good faith. She did not connect her mistress in the remotest degree with the murder, and she dwelt at length on the subsequent alarm and prostration of Mrs. Farrell, with the evident intent to

show her mistress' dread and abhorrence of the crime. Like all her sex on the witness stand, she protested too much, she weakened where she might have strengthened the case of her mistress; but, indeed, she did not think of "a case," at all. Her candor was the best evidence of her sincerity, for if she had had a suspicion of the guilt of her patrons and wished to shield them, she would have been suspicious and wary. As she stepped aside and took her place among the throng of towns-people that filled the great dining-hall, where the inquest was held, she saw herself confronted by the anxious and sorrowful faces of the villagers.

"She's fixed Miss Farrell's case for her, I guess," said David Fry, who knew something about law, as well as a good deal about theology; "I wouldn't want a better witness than that woman if I was prosecutor."

"It takes a *woman* to put her foot in it," said Jim Denby.

"Yes, and this 'un put both feet in, and threw her tongue arter 'em," added Sam Baylis, the village joiner.

"Has she got a grudge agin' Miss Farrell, I wonder?" came from Betsey Driggs, who was always present where a spectacle was in progress.

"No, indeed," replied Denby. "They're the best of friends and comrades; if Agnes Farrell *could* a done sich a thing, she'd a called on Martha Blunt to help her, and *she* wouldn't go back on her mistress neither. The housekeeper's just tellin' the

simple truth ; but she's told too much, and she's told it too well. If any o' you know any thing and air 'cited to tell it, you'd better take warnin' by Marthy Blunt."

"Well, look out fur yerself, Denby, it appears you hev somethin' to tell," said David Fry.

"I ain't got nothin' to tell that's goin' to hurt Miss Farrell, or Ernest. I see a light in the winder, and I see a man at the winder, it might a bean Joseph Farrell his self, fur all I know ; he 'peared to hev on a night-gownd ; that's all I've got to tell."

"But you'll be crossed-questioned, when it comes to a trial, and come it will," replied David Fry.

"They'll not git more out o' me than there's in me, I guess," said Denby.

"No, but Benedict Strong will twist it 'round, and turn it inside out, till he makes black out of white."

When Martha Blunt heard from the gossip of her fellow-villagers that her testimony had borne against her mistress she was amazed and grief-stricken. To connect Agnes Farrell even in thought with the crime, was an outrage. She burst into tears when Betsey Driggs upbraided her with disloyalty to the people who had made her what she was, as Betsey expressed it, and said, "I swore to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and I did it."

The entrance of Ernest Farrell, who was the next witness, forestalled further gossip. He was pale with excitement, but he gave his testimony, which in regard to the main facts corroborated the

housekeeper's testimony, in a firm voice and with a manner of enforced composure.

Agnes Farrell being unable to appear, her deposition was taken ; it was somewhat rambling and incoherent, and left a confused impression that she withheld something, but it confirmed what had gone before, and even to a certain extent criminated herself.

Dr. Armitage testified : " I was hastily summoned to see Mrs. Farrell on the morning of June 21st, whom I found suffering from violent hysteria. After getting the spasms under control, and seeing the symptoms yield to the treatment, I was about to leave the house when Ernest Farrell came to me in great agitation and informed me the housekeeper suspected his brother had been foully dealt with. At his request, I accompanied Mr. Farrell to the room of his brother. We received no answer to our summons, and Mr. Farrell led the way to another entrance into which the suite opened. On turning down the sheet I found the dead body of Joseph Farrell. The jugular vein was severed and death had been instantaneous. An odor of chloroform escaped from the sheets, showing that the man had been asphyxiated before the knife was used. The hands were folded on the breast, the print of a bloody right hand on the back of the murdered man's right hand showed the deed had not been self-committed."

Hannah Wraith, monthly nurse, testified : " I was sent fur on the night of the murder to wait on Mis'

Smart, she that was Matilda Jones," (reminded that Mrs. Smart was not connected with the case). "I sent the boy ahead," continued Mrs. Wraith, somewhat bewildered by the interruption, "to say I was comin', fur I didn't mind goin' alone, bein' used to putterin' about at night. I gathered up my catnip and lantern which I keep handy bein' expectin' "—— (here Mrs. Wraith was again reminded to keep strictly to the evidence); "and as I came in sight of Widder Farrell's house I seen a bright light in the upper winders. Thinkin' it was sickness, that bein' in my line of business, I was curus, and wanted to know, hevin' heard that Joseph Farrell had come back, and knowin' this light was in the spare room winders, I thought I would jest look round, knowin' that I had plenty of time, as Mis' Smart was slow, though her name *is* Smart " (recalled). "Well, then, I stepped on to the verandy, just under the front winders. The trees and every thing was drippin' from the heavy rainstorm, and I felt kind o' skerry. I looked up and I seen a figger inside the room ; the light was furnent me and the figger which made a sort of dancin' shadder on the wall. I can't say if the shadder was male or female. Yes, it *had* on a gownd. I thought I'd jest slip 'round and see if Marthy Blunt was stirrin', fer I knowed if *'twas* sickness she would be in the kitchen gettin' hot water and the like, though I knowed I had no occasion to be intrudin' myself in Mis' Farrell's affairs, she hevin' no use fer me, bein' dreadful sot on Nancy Blake, but——" (recalled again).

"Where did I leave off? Oh, yes; I went round the back way and got there jest in time to see from behind the water-butt, Ernest Farrell, or what I took fer him, bein' a tall man sized about like him. No, 'twas too dark to see if he was light or dark complected, or what color his hair was. He carried a bundle in his arms and was in a great hurry. I see right away it wan't Marthy, bein' too tall, Marthy bein' low; and not wantin' to be ketched watchin', I ducked behind the butt, though if it hed of bean Marthy I wouldn't have minded; me and Marthy allus hevin' bean good friends. Where was I? Yes, I remember now, I heard the cellar door unlock'd and laid back, and when I thought the coast was clar I peeked out and see the man shet down the cellar door and lock it agin. When I heard the back door shet I knowed I had found out all I was a-goin' to, though it wan't much to be sure. I heerd somethin' drop when I got round front agin, and I gathered up my lantern and started on. I overtook Jim Denby splashin' along in the mud with *his* lantern; and I ses, 'You're at yer old trade agin, air ye, Jim?' And ses he, 'Yes, folks must be buried, fer the night cometh'—but I forgit the Scriptur', and I sed I was at my trade too, fer folks must be born, and they most generally took the night time to do it in, though for my part I don't see as there's any——" (recalled). "We jogged along talkin' about life and death, he bein' at one end o' the line of business and I at t'other. No, he didn't say nothin' to me about what he hed

seen, he bein' awful close-mouthed and so be I, but I knowed he knowed as much as I knowed, fer 'twas him I heard drop. I hurried up, fer Mis' Smart, although she'd had five, one pair o' twins ——" (choked off).

After much other testimony more or less irrelevant, Stephen Black, coal dealer, testified that in putting away a load of coal for Mrs. Farrell on the twenty-first of June, he had found concealed in the coal-bin a dressing-gown in which were rolled a bloody towel and knife.

The coroner added his own testimony to the above, and the case was ready to go to the Grand Jury.

CHAPTER V.

AT THE PRISON.

AT last the coroner's verdict was given to the eager villagers, and every heart sank as they heard the dreadful words—"*That on the morning of the twenty-first of June, Joseph Farrell had come to his death from a wound inflicted by some sharp instrument in the hands of Agnes Farrell and Ernest Farrell.*"

There was nothing left for the law to do but to arrest the criminals, bury the body, and place the property under the protection of the law. It's work was swift and merciless.

When from her feeble condition the officers of the law had talked of separating Agnes Farrell and her son, and taking him alone to prison, leaving a guard to prevent Mrs. Farrell's escape, she had risen from her bed at once and declared her ability and intention to go. After the terrible ordeal of the morning she had sunk from the reaction of excessive emotion into an apathetic state from which she was aroused by the arrest of Ernest. He had implored her to remain in the house, for he knew that tended by her faithful housekeeper, although under legal surveillance, she would be

more comfortable than in a felon's cell. But she peremptorily refused to be separated from her son. "No," she said, with a resolute effort, "the roof that shelters you is good enough for me; come!"

They went forth together, Ernest supporting the tottering steps of Agnes Farrell, who cast a backward look of anguish at the beloved home, whose threshold she was destined never to cross again.

The drive of four miles to the county town of Marshmeadows, where the jail was located, was a terrible journey for Agnes Farrell and her son.

Pale as his prisoners, Sheriff Martin rode beside the carriage in silence; he scarcely dared to look at the accused, for grief, he knew, though self-inflicted, was a sacred thing. The evening gloom shrouded these two wretched people as they were borne through the streets of Brinkwater, bowed down with grief and shame; and many a sorrowful group, for horror had melted into pity at the sight, watched them as they vanished in the darkening distance, and then went sadly to their homes to repeat in endless narration the awful story of the murder. Sheriff Martin, who had taken the prisoners in charge, as was his duty, conducted them at once to his own house, for the prison, from long disuse, was found to be in an utterly uninhabitable state; the cells were damp and noisome, the iron gratings rust-eaten, the locks and bolts immovable. The sheriff was too humane a man to inflict useless suffering and risk on those committed to his keeping, and he took the responsibility of holding under

his own roof, which indeed was one with the jail, the prisoners he had just brought in until the prison quarters could be got ready for them.

Samuel Martin had been a resident of Brinkwater before his election to the office of sheriff. He had known the Farrell family from his childhood. Years ago, when Ernest was a mere boy, the sheriff's little son, while playing about the lake had fallen in ; the water was deep, and wide, and night was falling when the accident occurred. Ernest Farrell, in the holiday attire of a birth-night party, plunged into the water, and saved the boy's life at the risk of his own. Ah, many a time had Samuel Martin thought of the heroic deed, and wished, ay wished, the rescue had never been made. For the fair-haired, blue-eyed boy, on whom his soul doted, had gone astray and was now a fugitive from justice. No criminal ever came into the sheriff's hands who did not find justice tempered with mercy ; for in the eyes of every victim of the law he saw look forth the hunted soul of his wandering son. Gratitude and sympathy bound him to these new victims, whose humble, life-long friend he had been, with a double tie. "No irons," he had said to the turnkey who accompanied him when the arrest was made. "I will be responsible for the conduct of these people." And from the first moment he refused to believe them guilty, and set himself to evolve a theory of the murder which should exonerate Ernest Farrell and his mother.

The evening of this summer day proved to be

chill and rainy, and a fire had been kindled in the broad chimney of the great stone-flagged parlor of the sheriff's house.

A green parrot, hung aloft, ruffled its feathers, and croaked in a drowsy, muffled voice at the entrance of the strangers: "Poor Polly, Poor Polly;" then fully roused he shrieked aloud: "*Murder! murder! murder! He did it! he did it! he did it! Kill him! kill him! kill him!*" Agnes Farrell, absorbed in her anguish, had not heard the parrot's first utterance, and when this accusing cry rang on her ear, struck with mortal terror, as though through this prophetic voice she heard her son condemned by all the world, she would have fallen to the earth if the swift arms of Martin had not caught her. "Cover up that darned bird!" he roared to his wife. "It's only Dick's parrot, ma'am," he said, placing Mrs. Farrell gently in a large arm-chair. "The boy taught it to say a good many things, and that wicked speech stuck by him, as wicked things are apt to do. I would have killed it long ago but for Mary. Dick loved the parrot so; and the bird had a sort of human feeling for him. Mary thinks he hasn't many friends now. We seldom mention him, to each other," the sheriff went on, as though he would make Mrs. Farrell forget her sorrow in listening to his own, "but he is never out of our thoughts day or night. The bird sometimes calls out his name, and it goes like a knife through my heart, but women are different to men; Mary says it seems as if he wasn't forgot-

ten ; though he's not likely to be that, while her heart and mine beats. Mary," he called to his wife, "bring Mrs. Farrell a cup of tea, quick."

The sheriff's wife, a buxom, sweet-faced woman, of great goodness of heart, yet all a woman, had stood aghast from the moment of the entrance of the prisoners. They were strangers to her. She had been a keeper at home in Brinkwater, and had not mingled with the village gossips ; she only knew of this woman, through the praises of her husband, as the rich, proud, beautiful Mrs. Farrell, of Claire County. She had often seen her carriage, with its laughing bevy of summer guests, roll through the streets of Brinkwater, and had looked upon her as a being privileged above the lot of common mortals. Agnes Farrell then, as a murderess, was something so monstrous that she could not adjust herself to the conception of the idea. She approached the prisoner timidly, with the cup of steaming tea. Could it be that the white and jeweled hand extended to take it was red with murder? Agnes Farrell raised her heavy lids and gave a heart-rending look into the face of the sheriff's wife. She saw compassion painted there ; for Mary Martin recognized in the prisoner a suffering woman, and a heart-broken mother. How dare she whose own son was a fugitive from justice sit in judgment on this woman? If she showed no pity to this sinful, nay, perhaps wicked woman, what man or woman would show pity unto hers? If she was hard and uncharitable, would not her

unborn babe, receiving from its mother a heart of stone, turn and rend *her* in the evil days?

"Ah, you too are a mother," sighed Agnes, seeing the conflict in Mary Martin's face," and have suffered;" then, for the first time since the tragedy that had overthrown her hopes and filled her with shame and despair, she wept great drops of bitter tears. The jailer's wife kneeled beside her and strove to soothe, if human words and sympathy can soothe, in such a desperate strait, the stricken woman.

"There, dear heart, cry, cry!" she said, mingling her tears with those of Agnes Farrell, "'twill ease and do you good."

Meanwhile Ernest Farrell paced the room in a state of terrible agitation, stunned with horror at the crime, and stung with shame at the situation in which he found himself. The murder, the inquest, and the arrest had followed each other in such rapid succession, his mother's condition had so alarmed and occupied him, that his thoughts and feelings had been on the rack all day; he had had not one moment in which to reflect on the awful result a trial would bring forth, if the evidence before the coroner was sustained. He looked at his wretched mother and saw reflected in her face that she had foreseen from the first the desperate situation.

Alone, without money,—for the fact that his brother's death made him the heir to his father's estate had not occurred to him,—to whom could they turn for aid? And (ah, bitterest thought of

all!) would *she* who had plighted her troth to him, the woman he loved with his whole soul, abide faithful in the face of this awful and disgraceful calamity? His shame burned him at the thought of what she must suffer when the hideous story of the murder came to her knowledge; he was overwhelmed for a moment, but the next, with prompt decision, he drew forth a card and pencil from his pocket, and stooping over the sheriff's table strewn with writs and subpœnas and other official papers, he wrote with throbbing brain and trembling fingers a letter to his love. He strove to compose his thoughts, and frame some words of renunciation that would bear the burden of his love and anguish—of his innocence he did not even think—when the outer door swung open, and, unannounced, Virgin Grey, her hair beaded with the summer rain, her lovely, anxious face flushed with emotion, her eyes shining through their tears like stars, swiftly entered, and before he was aware of her presence, her arms were around her lover's neck, her head was on his bosom, her voice was pouring words of love and hope in his entranced ear. "I did not ask permission, the door was unlocked," she said, turning to the sheriff who had just entered and was looking on wonderingly at the scene. "Before God," continued Virgin Grey, "this innocent and wronged man is my affianced husband; this injured woman is my mother; if they are guilty, I am guilty, and my place is beside them."

"I've no objections, Miss Grey, to your seeing

your friends," replied the sheriff with an embarrassed air ; " but it's not quite regular ; and being an officer, and a sworn agent of the law, I must do my duty."

" Yes, Martin," said the young girl, " you must do your duty, but remember that a higher law says we must do justly and love mercy. It is hard, indeed, for these dear friends to suffer for the truth's sake, and you and I and all who love them, must endeavor our utmost to find out the whole truth that lies buried under this terrible error."

Agnes Farrell lifted her eyes, and fixed them upon Virgin Grey, without one ray of hope in their dark depths. " If," she said to herself, " this girl were an angel sent from heaven to save us, I might believe her ; but she is only a fallible mortal, *and she has not seen what I have seen.*"

Virgin, seeing the drooping and despairing form of Agnes Farrell, went across the room and knelt at her feet. " Mother," she cried, taking the cold, passive hands of the prisoner, and pressing them against her gentle bosom : " may God forget me, and cast me off forever if I forsake you in your calamity. Nothing but death shall part us." " Ay," whispered Agnes Farrell, hoarsely, " but death *will* part us ; death "——she dare not finish the awful sentence.

" No," Virgin passionately exclaimed, " this ordeal *must* end in a triumph. Oh, mother ! remember, and be comforted, that the blessed Saviour of

mankind suffered disgrace"—"Ay, and an ignominious death," groaned Agnes.

"And as surely as He rose from the grave and ascended into heaven to judge the living and the dead, so surely will He burst these bonds of error and false judgement that blind and bind our accusers."

Virgin rose to her feet as she uttered aloud these prophetic words, looking like an inspired Sibyl who saw beyond the veil of time and sense. And who shall say that she did not? Love and faith are the wings that uplift the soul above the mists that veil its horizon, and give prophetic visions of the future.

The prison bell struck nine o'clock. "I'll see you home, Miss Grey," the sheriff said, in an authoritative voice that suggested obedience. Ernest rose involuntarily to go with her, when the recollection that his freedom was gone struck his heart with a new pang; he sank into a seat and dropped his head in despair.

"Look up, dear love," cried Virgin, with a glance directed to his mother, "for *her* sake, and believe for mine that all will yet be well." She paused a moment on the threshold, looking back with tender, smiling eyes, then vanished like a lovely, heavenly vision.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHERIFF OF MARSHMEADOWS.

SAMUEL MARTIN was a man beneath whose blunt manners and rugged exterior lay a large and tender heart. Since his election to the office of sheriff, nearly two years before, the "crimes and misdemeanors" committed under his jurisdiction had been, compared with other districts, remarkably few. The custody, therefore, of two persons whom he had long known and honored, held for murder and likely to be convicted and executed, was an intolerable burden to a man of his sensibility.

The fascination that the charm of Ernest Farrell's character had obtained over the mind and heart of this plain man was marvelous. He had held him in contrast to his own erring son so long that he came at last to regard Ernest Farrell as an epitome of human perfection. His friendship for the family, his obligation of gratitude to Ernest, his firm belief in his innocence, with the fear that one day, (he shuddered to think), some one might have to do for his own son, what it would become his duty to do for young Farrell, filled him with such anguish and sense of responsibility that he felt he bore upon his shoulders the

sins of the whole world. He had never for one moment believed in the guilt of Ernest. What the solution of the mystery that shrouded the murder was, he could not divine, but that there was a solution which should confirm the innocence of the son, at least, he firmly and solemnly believed.

After the indictment for murder was brought by the Grand Jury he could not rest; the indictment seemed, to his excited mind, equivalent to conviction; he felt there was not a moment to be lost in seeking the hidden clew to the crime which existed, as yet, only in his imagination.

His thoughts were constantly employed in inventing different theories of the murder, which were abandoned almost as soon as conceived.

He had assumed the innocence of one of his prisoners, at least, but how to effect a rescue was the question that filled his waking-hours and haunted his sleep. He was too wise a man, however, to let suspicion get abroad that the Sheriff of Claire County was in sympathy with his prisoners. He knew thoroughly the character of Benedict Strong and the course he would be certain to pursue in prosecuting the case; that he would use all legitimate and illegitimate means to attain his object, and would secure the best legal aid the county afforded, thus leaving the defense enfeebled and powerless. The sheriff would give him no advantage.

The Farrells' were without money or relatives to advocate their cause; imprisoned and under the ban of popular conviction; the chain of circum-

stantial evidence was complete and consistent; the case was indeed desperate. Where to turn for help the anxious sheriff did not know. He *must* stand between these hapless people and their doom. If they were guiltless he felt that a heavy share of the responsibility of their taking-off would fall upon him. Every impulse of his soul commanded him to treat these people, whose keeper he was, as innocent victims of a terrible mistake. As he trusted God's mercy would be shown to his own son, he must do his duty in seeing that the law did not transcend its prerogative by punishing the innocent to appease the precipitate demands of justice. It, perhaps, was the strongest evidence of the man's honesty that, tortured as he was by this dreadful anxiety, the thought that it was in his power to free the prisoners and aid their escape, had not yet suggested itself to him. He went one day to a druggist, however, feigning toothache, and asked for an ounce or two of laudanum. The man labeled the bottle *poison*, telling the sheriff the vial contained opium enough to compass the death of several people, and advising him to put it beyond the reach of his children.

"There's only the baby, and he has not taken to climbing yet," replied the sheriff. The thought of the wanderer was in his heart, but he could not, alas! be counted among the children.

Martin walked away with the drug in his pocket, not daring to think what he might possibly do with it.

Mrs. Martin saw the harrowing pre-occupation of her husband, and tried to wean him from the trouble that preyed upon his mind by appealing to his fatherly affection. "See how it grows, Samuel," she said, uncovering the tiny, red, wrinkled face of the new-born infant.

"Does it?" asked Martin, looking absently at the little being which was so lovely in the eyes of the fond mother; then turning away with a deep drawn sigh, added "*Ay, but it's a boy*, Mary!"

"Were you wanting a girl, Samuel?" asked his wife, tenderly.

"Our little maid that died gave us no trouble all her sweet young life. I thank God! she is safe in heaven, Mary. But the boy, you know——"

"Yes, father, I know; but I haven't given up hope yet; and I am sure Dick will come back and may be help us in a time of need."

"Mary, if I should hear of his death to-day it would be the most blessed piece of news that could come to me in this world."

"Don't talk like that, Samuel," pleaded the mother; "I am not willing to give him up; he is so young; and when he was little he was good and kind; surely, the boy who never forgot to kiss his mother good-night, and said his prayers"—her tears were falling now, and she could not go on for sobbing—"Samuel, I heard him praying the very night he went away."

The sheriff was a hopeless man; he could say nothing; he kissed his wife and gently wiped the

tears that were fast falling on the sleeping babe in her arms.

"See, Mary, you baptize him in your sorrow. Do not fret, wife; let us believe that he will grow up to be a comfort to us," said the sheriff, trying to smile.

"Oh, I am sure of it, Samuel," she said.

The subject of the absent son was seldom alluded to between the parents; they daily read despair and apprehension in each other's eyes, but their lips were sealed, and his crime, the forerunner of worse deeds, perhaps, was never mentioned between them.

The wretched sheriff, urged on by his gnawing anxiety, haunted the prison cells. "If he *is* guilty, oh that I could get him to confess! that would be some relief, at least," he cried. As he passed upon his rounds the two words "Circumstantial evidence," "circumstantial evidence," rang in his ears and echoed in his footsteps.

He pored over the best summaries on the subject of such evidence, and he knew how small a "circumstance" could condemn a man to death. A patch upon the knee leaving its imprint in the mud, a mended shoe, betraying a lurking foot-step, had led to conviction and condemned men to a shameful death.

In this case there was a long chain of consistent evidence, every link of which was perfect. This fetter weighed upon Martin, and he dragged it

about as the galley slave drags his chain : there was no escape from it.

Indeed the sheriff was fast becoming a monomaniac on the subject of the innocence of the accused. One day he approached the grating where Ernest Farrell's pale face greeted him with a wan smile ; for the young man saw in the kindly and troubled eyes of the sheriff the soul of a friend look forth.

"How is your case to-day, sheriff?" asked Ernest. In his desperation Martin had presented a hypothetical case, in which all his doubts and fears were confided to young Farrell in behalf of a fictitious prisoner.

"Well, matters don't mend much," the sheriff answered, with some reluctance ; "the case will have to go to trial as it stands, I guess."

"Have you urged the prisoner to confess?" asked Ernest.

"No," returned Martin, "I have not done just that, but I am thinking of it," he added, with a beating heart.

"I should urge it upon him, by all means," advised Ernest, to whose upright character this seemed the best way out of the trouble. "You say it will make no difference in the result of the trial?"

"No, not if he pleads guilty." The sheriff turned away his head, he could not bear the gaze of those beautiful fearless eyes ; "not if he's guilty, Mr. Farrell," he said sadly ; then turning quickly, he demanded suddenly, and boldly, as if he feared his

courage would desert him : " is that what you would do if you were in his place."

The young man was startled at the unexpected question, and involuntarily withdrew from the grating.

" Ah, Martin," he said bitterly, " I see, you have meant *me*. I had hoped you knew me ; I felt there was one man who was my friend, and believed me innocent."

" Before God, Ernest Farrell, I *do* believe you are an innocent man," cried the sheriff passionately. " I *do*." All pretense was useless now ; he had committed himself to Ernest by word of mouth, who saw though the subterfuge and read the sheriff's whole heart. " I have been on the rack from the first hour of this dreadful business. I can not let it go on without doing all in my power to save you."

" And you begin by wanting me to confess to a lie ? " said Ernest, bitterly.

" No, no, I don't want you to confess to a lie ; but there is no break in this endless chain of evidence, and—and I thought you might, may be, be able to throw some light upon it that would help me to—help you."

" If it were possible for me to throw any light on this horrible murder, do you not suppose I would gladly and willingly do it ? " asked young Farrell, in a tone of the greatest concern. " Do you think I have any thing to conceal ? "

" Great heavens ! what do I mean ? am I losing

my reason? do I expect this man to criminate his own mother?" exclaimed the sheriff mentally. For in his determination to save Ernest Farrell, and failing to find any other theory of the murder, the sheriff had been forced to the conclusion that Agnes Farrell was guilty of, or at least accessory to, the crime. Her conduct from the first suspicion of the murder, and through every step of the ordeal since, had been that of a guilty woman; or one on whose soul weighed a dreadful secret of crime. She had given up all hope from the moment of the discovery of the murder. Since her imprisonment her despair had been complete. She asked constantly news of her son, whom she seemed to think was far removed from her, though, in fact, their cells were but a narrow space apart. She asked the sheriff daily how he looked: if he ate and slept well, and if his bed was comfortable.

She thought that being a woman she might have been favored, and that the chair, rug, and table had been given her in consideration of her sex. She asked continually what day of the week it was, for she seemed unable to mark the flight of time.

"It grows dark so soon here," she said, "it seems a great many nights since we came." She paced her cell constantly and cared for neither food nor sleep. "I never see them do that when they have a clear conscience," thought the sheriff, who watched his prisoner with the most intense solicitude. Books and papers lay on her table untouched. When Martin called her attention to

them, and begged her to compose herself by reading, "Yes, yes," she answered excitedly, "sometime, sometime."

One morning the sheriff brought her a nosegay of honeysuckle, a flower of which she was passionately fond. "Take them away!" she cried, "they will wither in this unhappy air:" their odor brought to her the days she now looked back upon as happy.

"But you may find a letter within them," said the sheriff, who blushed to remember that he had opened and read (as was his duty) the little unsealed note which Virgin Grey had wrapped in them; the spirit of which was as sweet and tender as the fragrance of the flowers that inclosed it. "Give it to me," she said, making no movement to touch the flowers the sheriff had laid on the table. He opened the nosegay and gave her the missive. She took it and ran her eyes over it mechanically. The words, so trustful, and soothing, conveyed no comfort to the distracted heart of Agnes Farrell. She continued her walk back and forth, dropping the paper as she went.

Martin picked it up, and carried the flowers and note to Ernest.

"God pity and help my poor mother; what can I do to make her agony more tolerable?" he said.

The sheriff whispered a sentence in the ear of the young man. It electrified him like a message of hope.

"Dare I! May I!" he cried.

"To-morrow night," replied the sheriff.

"Why not to-night?" demanded Ernest, eagerly.

"Because, I have important business to transact to-night," the sheriff answered.

"But tell her I am to come, at least," said Ernest.

Agnes Farrell received the promise of her son's visit with seeming indifference, but a visible shudder shook her frame. The things of time and sense had lost their hold upon her. She lived in the light of but one dreadful day, and all her energies were strained to wait for it and meet it.

The following morning Sheriff Martin went to Brinkwater; he was walking at a rapid pace through the village-green, with the pre-occupied air of one whose thoughts are turned inward. He met Denby whom he was about to pass without recognition, when the latter's cheery "Good-mornin', sheriff; fine growin' weather," arrested him.

"Ah, Denby, is that you?" said the sheriff. "I shall want you probably. I am on my way to the church-yard to look after Joseph Farrell's grave. I promised his brother to do so, and I may need you to identify it."

"Couldn't Ernest Farrell trust me that fer?" questioned the grave-digger, sorrowfully.

"Yes, Denby, he would trust you for that, and for far more I am sure, but Mr. Farrell is in prison, and you can not reach him, while I, you know, see him every day, and can give him what little comfort

there is in knowing that his brother's body has been properly buried." As the two men neared the church-yard, Bill Baylis came hurrying up to overtake them, with his hat in his hand and mopping his red face with a redder handkerchief. "Good-mornin', sheriff; mornin', Jim. I jist was a wantin' to know if it's all reg'lar about that there coffun?"

"What do you mean?" asked the sheriff with a frown.

"Well, who's to pay the bill, that's what I mean," replied Baylis, doggedly.

"The estate is able and ready to pay all debts at the proper time," answered the sheriff, in a tone that meant there was nothing more to be said.

"It was a high-priced casket," said the joiner, dropping into professional parlance, "and I paid cash down for it."

"And you will get cash down for it," growled the sheriff, as he strode away.

This piece of grateful information so mollified the fears of the mercenary joiner, that, taking off his hat, he made a sweeping bow, and with a broad smile irradiating his ruddy visage remarked that, "It was a beautiful day, and as sparklin' as a new varnished coffun."

The sheriff and grave-digger entered the church-yard: the latter leading the way to the murdered man's grave, which was in a spot remote from the family plot, either because the lot was filled, or because, having come to a violent end, those in charge of the funeral thought it "irregular" to have

Joseph Farrell buried beside the bones of his fathers until after the trial, when a more ceremonious funeral could be held.

"So I shall have to tell Ernest Farrell that his brother is buried in Potter's Field," said the sheriff in a tone of surprise.

"Well, not exactly that, sheriff ; you see *I* hed nothin' to do with locatin' the grave," replied Denby apologetically ; "I was told to dig it here, and I did."

"Of course you are not to be held responsible, Denby, for that." The sheriff's tone was conciliatory, for he knew he had an ally in this humble man.

"I'm willin' to bear my sheer of the whole blamed business, if I could only holp them folks up yonder," said the grave digger, as he made a movement of his head in the direction of Marshmeadows. "I've neither wife, nor chick, nor child, and diggin' graves ain't a payin', or a cheerful callin'. I'm ready to take Ernest Farrell's place any day to save him."

"You are willing to help them?" asked the sheriff, looking keenly into the downcast face of the grave-digger.

"Yes, because Ernest Farrell could no more a done that murder than I could a done it, an' he's young and oughter have a chance, he's better drilled for it than I am, and there's his mother —" the grave-digger stopped short.

"Have you any reason for believing him innocent?" the sheriff asked tentatively.

"When it comes to reasons, sheriff," said Denby, rubbing his forehead in a meditative way, "I don't know as I can jist reason it out; but it's perfectly clear to my mind that Ernest Farrell couldn't do it."

"Do your convictions of innocence include his mother?"

"Somebody done that murder, sure, and certain, but heven' nothin' but my own lights to go by, it's not for me to say *who* did it."

The sheriff ordered Denby to plant a stout board at either end of the new-made grave, and mark the initials of the dead man thereon, until further orders. While they were still talking the shrill sound of a whistle splintered the summer air, and both men stopped and turned their heads in the direction whence the sound came.

"It's that scarecrow, Artey," said the grave-digger, as the idiot son of Martha Blunt leaped over a flat tombstone behind which he had been hiding. "He prowls around here like a speret; he don't know what fear is, I believe; day and night's all the same to him."

The boy approached fearlessly, pushing up with the back of his hand the flopping brim of his well-worn hat, and the tangled mass of hair beneath it. "Here's the man thet'll put you in jail," said Denby, with feigned fierceness, thinking to frighten the boy, who was often intrusive, into good manners.

"Will he put the pigeons in jail, too?" asked Artey, not understanding the threat and grinning up

into the sheriff's face, who, attracted by something familiar in the idiot's aspect, was intently watching him.

"The pigeons don't roll in the church-yard grass and take their meals off the tombstones : the pigeons will stay where they air, as long as they behave themselves."

"Then I'll stay with the pigeons," said Artey.

"And where do the pigeons stay?" asked Martin. The idiot darted a look of alarm at the sheriff, and then turned on the grave-digger a piteous face. "*He* don't want 'em, Artey," said his friend soothingly ; "they're over to Farrell's," with a look at the sheriff, and a nod in the direction of the homestead.

"They're my brothers," pleaded the idiot. "I love them and they talk to me."

"What do they say, Artey?" asked the grave-digger, with a pleased intention to draw the boy out.

"They say," replied the idiot, melting into a low, soft, musical laugh, "that the grave-digger's first cousin to the owl;" he made a deep, guttural sound, an exact imitation of a pigeon's coo ; then he drew forth the whistle and blew a shrill blast.

"Is that the way you call the pigeons?" asked the sheriff of the boy.

"Thet's what he does it with," Denby answered for the boy, who seeing a great yellow butterfly sail past him, bounded after it swinging his hat, in hot pursuit.

"Yes," continued Denby, in reply to a question of the sheriff's; "he's harmless enough; though the devil do get into him sometimes; he rode a horse to death, they say. I think it's when the moon fulls he's at his wildest. He's nothing but a child, either; he lost his whistle awhile back, and mourned so about it I had no peace till I bought him another: and yet he makes wise sort o' remarks, too, sometimes."

"For instance, that one about the owl and the grave-digger, Jim?" said the sheriff facetiously.

"Now I call that un kind o' wild, sheriff, but he has a cute way o' flyin' the track when you try to pin him down to any thing."

"How old is he?" asked the sheriff; for like all half-witted people Artey bore in his face the expression of perpetual youth.

"I don' no," replied Denby, "I reckon he' sold enough to vote," chuckling at his own wit.

The two men separated, with an injunction from the sheriff to Denby to remember his instructions in regard to Joseph Farrell's grave.

"They say," continued the grave-digger, for being a lonely man he was given to audible soliloquy, "that grass won't grow on a murdered man's grave; but I'll keep *that* poor devil's grave green, ef I have to paint it."

* * * * * *

The days flowed on, as though no great crime had stained the peaceful annals of Brinkwater,

and men and women had long since resumed their customary vocations. Upon the great house, towering above its neighbors, men looked with saddened hearts, as one looks upon the charred and blackened ruins of a conflagration. Its smokeless chimneys, its closed doors, the silence and sense of desolation that hung about it, the awful crime committed under its roof, made of what had been the pride and glory of the village, its terror, and reproach. When the white radiance of the full moon smote its windows, the villagers fancied they saw lights moving within, and the story that the house was haunted grew and took firm root in the minds of the superstitious rustics. Belated children, in search of a truant cow, whistled loudly, and flew with fearful steps past the solitary house ; the homeward bound lover, forgetful of the lapse of time, quickened his pace, as the clock struck twelve, afraid to look behind him lest he see a horrid specter ; and even in broad daylight men and women shuddered and turned aside as they neared the dreadful spot. The Sunday congregation, long lingering after service among the church-yard graves, discussed the murder sitting on the tombs.

"I told ye so," said Betsey Driggs, voicing the whole crew of village female prophets, "pride allus goes afore a fall, as I've lived long enough to know. Not but as there's plenty o' folks older 'n me," remembering her estate of spinsterhood, whose date was uncertain and indefinite, "and I knew Agnes Farrell's day would come, but I didn't expect it

would come in sich an awful manner : it's amazin' to think of folks that never knowed work, or want ; that rode in their kerridges, and wore their silks and satins and gewgaws, goin' to jail, and bein' tried fur murder."

"I should think Andrew Farrell would raise up in his grave-clothes and bear witness agin' her," said Jim Denby, whose figures of speech were colored by his profession of grave-digger.

"There's no need of any more witnessin'," answered Betsey Driggs ; "it's done, and we all know who did it, and what it was done fer."

"The old man druv the fust nail into Joseph Farrell's coffin, when he made that air will," came from Bill Baylis, the village joiner.

"Well, he's got to do the sufferin' for it," said David Fry, the local preacher, and a firm believer in future, endless punishment.

"I'd ruther take *his* chances, than his widder's, when you're countin' on sufferin', David. She's got to suffer, but there'll be a way fer Ernest Farrell out of it ; that lad 'll never hang for murder."

"You're sittin' up for prosecutor, jedge and jury all in one, Denby ; I don't know's the Lord's enlightened you mor'n the rest of us. I wouldn't go thet far afore the trial. Ernest Farrell's spunky enough, when his blood's up, and they do say there was an awful sight of provoke."

"See here, David Fry," broke in the grave-digger, "yer a-talkin' as if young Farrell, that never done any harm in his life, was a dipped and dyed

sinner ; sich things have to grow, they don't come to hand ready-made."

"Thet's jist where you're mistakin', Jim ; they *do* come ready-made," exclaimed Fry eagerly, who was a believer in the doctrine of original sin, and never let an opportunity pass to give his testimony to the truth.

"Well, you're not a-goin' to git me into no argyment," said Denby, who knew his antagonist of old, as he slipped from the tombstone, and dusted the seat of his pantaloons. The grave-digger moved off in the direction of Joseph Farrell's new made grave, of which he had charge.

He walked around the mound of earth, pressing the clayey soil with his stout boots. This was the first murdered man's grave Denby had ever dug; he had a sort of professional pride in the fact ; it connected him with the important event in a perfectly respectable way and increased his consequence in his own eyes and those of the villagers. He looked about him and found the church-yard deserted : no one now remained but the idiot son of Martha Blunt, who was playing among the graves and blowing thistle-down, which he pursued with the most childish delight ; as he ran he fell sprawling at the feet of the grave-digger.

"Mind what you are about, Artey!" cried Denby ; "you'd better git up and go home."

"Is this your home?" the boy asked, peering into Denby's face, as he lay on the grass.

"In a manner it is ; I take keer o' these here

graves, and I want no foolin' around 'em, either."

The boy drew forth a small whistle and blew a shrill blast.

"None o' yer Gabriel trumptin' round here, or I'll take that whistle away from ye," said the grave-digger, making a dive, as though he would snatch the bauble.

The idiot sprang to his feet, and ran away, and was soon blowing a defiant challenge at a safe distance from capture.

"He'll die in his bed, at a good old age," sighed the grave-digger, "while them as hes their wits, and an excuse for livin', 'ill be cut off like *him*," with a motion of his head in the direction of the new-made grave.

As Betsey Driggs had said, "There was nothing more to be done fur Joseph Farrell. And it would a been comfortin' to him if he could a been present at his own funeral to know what a han'some corpse he made."

The whole village had turned out to the funeral: the officiating clergyman had warned his flock against the love of riches which eat into the soul like rust; the village schoolmaster "had pointed a moral," with the example of young Farrell's crime, and foolish mothers now began—so soon do mortals pass from the familiar to the monstrous—to frighten naughty children with the headless ghost of Joseph Farrell.

* * * * * *

CHAPTER VII.

A NIGHT VISIT.

VIRGIN GREY bore the calamity that had overtaken her dearest friends in the spirit that walks in the light of youth and hope. Their innocence was a matter of course; the terrible accusation that hung over them; the ignominy of their position (and she included herself in all the doubt and shame), was something that must be endured until the time should come—and that it surely would come, she never doubted—for their final and triumphant vindication. Instead of an added burden, she must be a prop on which the heavy ladened hearts of her friends should find sure and unfailing support. She brought all the qualities of a devout and heroic soul to sustain her in bearing the weight laid upon her young shoulders. It became her duty to do all in her power to aid her stricken and helpless friends; and she never faltered in the sacred trust. She went about her daily tasks as usual, though her cheek was paler, and her step less elastic; but she bore herself with the same calm dignity

that had ever marked her conduct. No curious gossip dared to penetrate the sheath of reserve in which she incased herself. She was pointed out to strangers as the girl whose lover was in jail for murder, and every step was followed by vulgar, prying eyes; every act discussed by hard, unsympathizing tongues. She knew and felt it all; but for the dear sake of those in whose sufferings she bore an equal part, she kept an undaunted heart; an unquenchable courage. Her class in Sunday-school, the duty of teaching which she resumed after the summer vacation was ended, never found her absent. The little maidens scanned their teacher with curious awe on the first Sunday, but when the lesson was gone over with the same gentle patience, and nothing was omitted, or nothing forgotten, they gradually recovered confidence, and looked into Virgin's calm face with innocent, fearless eyes.

It was her habit to review the work of the past lessons, and when the class, in reciting in concert the Decalogue, came to the sixth commandment, each voice faltered and broke down at the last dreadful word that now had a new and terrible signficance for them.

"*Thou shalt not kill*," repeated Virgin in a steadfast voice, and each little tongue took up the words anew and uttered them boldly. In church, the entrance of the solitary girl was looked for with eager curiosity; heads were turned, and eyes pursued her until she reached her pew, and when

she bowed her fair young head in prayer, many, neglecting their own devotions, wondered what unusual form of petition she offered.

From the moment of the commitment of Agnes Farrell and her son, Martha Blunt had shown a strange, nervous anxiety.

"It's her testimony workin' on her," explained Betsey Driggs, when the village gossips wondered at the housekeeper's restlessness: "*her* tongue's the halter thet'll hang Agnes Farrell. I shouldn't wonder if she knew more'n she told, neither. She didn't kerry off the key to that back door for nothin'. I reckon 'twould a bean easy enough to a came back, if Agnes Farrell had wanted her; they're both in the same boat, I'll warrant ye."

But, notwithstanding Miss Driggs' malicious insinuations, the general opinion of Brinkwater exonerated Martha Blunt from knowledge of, or complicity in, the murder of Joseph Farrell. It was shown that she stayed all night at the house of her aunt, and was seen by several persons returning home in the morning: besides, the woman's reputation for honesty and truthfulness was so good, that as Jim Denby said, "Marthy Blunt would a testified agin herself, if there had a bean any thing to testify to."

"You'd a sed thet about Agnes Farrell onct," returned Betsey Driggs.

"I'll say this much for Agnes Farrell now, thet she'd never hev hit a dead enemy."

"Oh, no," replied Miss Driggs, scornfully, "she'd

ruther take her game alive; the hitten' would a done some good, then."

"It's a strange Providence thet punishes the deservin' and lets the wicked go quit," said Denby, in an aside to his neighbor.

"I wonder if Jim Denby's goin' to be allowed to live long enough to dig *all* the graves in Brinkwater church-yard?" inquired Miss Driggs of her neighbor.

"No, Betsey, he'll never live to dig your'n; the oldest residenter 'll be in glory long afore *thet's* needed, and you'll be a bald-headed, toothless warnin' to the risin' generation——"

"See here, now," interposed David Fry, whose calling and gentleness of nature had conferred upon him the character of peacemaker, "see here, neighbors: bad blood and hot words has led to one murder in Brinkwater, they say; let the awful example warn ye all to live together in brotherly love, kindly affectioned one t'ward another."

"The Scripturs don't say nothin' about bein' kindly affectioned t'ward hedgehogs," came from Betsey Driggs, as she moved away to escape Denby's parting shot that "hedgehogs was respectable animals compared to porky-pines which let their stinging splints fly around promiscuous." It fell harmless on the air, however, and did not reach the ears of the village virago.

If Martha Blunt, as Betsey Driggs averred, knew, or suspected, more than she disclosed at the inquest, she was wise enough to keep her own counsel. That

something preyed upon the housekeeper's mind which she would not, or could not divulge, those who knew her best believed ; and thus accounted for the marked change in her behavior. For a short time she remained with the people who had charge of her son, but the innocent and incoherent prattle of Artey now seemed to annoy her, and from having been always patient and kind, she grew irritable and harsh toward him. She declared, at last, that she could remain idle no longer. She packed her trunks and boxes, and after making arrangements for the care and maintenance of her son, she set out for Marshmeadows, in quest of service. Martha Blunt's character for honesty and efficiency had preceded her and made it an easy matter for the housekeeper of Mrs. Farrell to find a situation suited to her wants, but she gave up her place at the end of the month, on hearing that Sheriff Martin was looking for an elderly woman to take charge of his house, as his wife's whole attention was now absorbed by the new infant.

When she found herself under the same roof that sheltered her former mistress, Martha Blunt recovered, in some degree, her former serenity. She manifested, at first, no undue interest in the prisoners, and was very reticent when questioned about the affairs of the family, even by those who avowed themselves friendly, but she felt no little comfort in preparing the food that nourished them, and bestowed more loving care in its preparation, than she had ever done in the most painstaking days of

her housekeeping. She replaced the coarse, strong crockery used in the prison by money taken from her own purse, with the most delicate and beautiful ware to be found in Marshmeadows, and fearing the curiosity of the sheriff's wife, Martha told her it was her own property and she knew Mrs. Farrell could never drink her tea out of a Delft cup. But it did not take the housekeeper long to discover that both Sheriff Martin and his wife bore no ill-will to the prisoners, and that the anxiety and sense of responsibility that preyed upon her was shared, at least, by Samuel Martin.

She soon proved herself indispensable to the sheriff's household. Mrs. Martin's time and thoughts were wholly occupied with the young infant; and the sheriff's official duties often called him from home, so that Martha Blunt had the housekeeping entirely under her charge, as well as at times the care of the prisoners. She was interested in, and absorbed by, her new duties; she seemed hardly to give her son a thought, but she knew the harmless natural was in safe keeping, and, though devotedly attached to his mother, was only happy when amid his familiar haunts, from which he never wandered.

When the day's work was over, and Martha's time was her own, she found her way to the home of Virgin Grey, whose greatest comfort she was in these sad days. The housekeeper was in almost constant communication with Agnes and Ernest Farrell, and through her Virgin heard from them daily.

To Virgin's anxious questions she replied: "They are just as comfortable as they can be, to—be—in—jail, you know. Sheriff Martin had the cells newly floored and whitewashed. I, myself, carried a rocking-chair and rug to Mrs. Farrell, which, with the nice cot and table the sheriff put in, makes it quite home-like," said the housekeeper, in a desperate attempt to make the best of what was so bad. "And," she continued, with some pride, "Mrs. Farrell takes her tea and toast off of as good china as Marshmeadows affords. I get her meals with my own hands, too, and that goes for something."

"My poor Ernest! has he been made—comfortable—too?" asked Virgin, brokenly.

"Yes, he has the same attention, and comforts, and plenty of books, beside."

"Oh, Martha!" exclaimed Virgin, looking into the woman's sympathizing face with piteous, tearful eyes, "tell me how he looks, how he bears it!"

"Well, he is composed, and bears up for your sake, and his mother's. You know it is his way to make the best of every thing. I think he has a good hope now of acquittal. Sheriff Martin is working hard for it, I believe; but that's between you and me. Ernest Farrell is pale and sad enough. I think I never saw him look so handsome. When he comes to the grating—"

"Oh, my God, how can I bear it!" sobbed Virgin beneath her breath. The housekeeper

turned and saw the girl with her hands pressed to her bosom, and eyes streaming with tears.

"They are no more guilty than I am, or you are," cried Martha, passionately, clasping the quivering young form in her strong embrace.

"It is not a question with us of their guilt, Martha; but some one is guilty, and who the guilty person is, you and I, and all who love them, must do our utmost to discover."

"I have racked my brains till I am weary and worn with thinking, and I get no nearer the truth," said the housekeeper.

"Would it be possible," asked Virgin, after a moment's reflection, "to enter the house at Brinkwater?"

It had occurred to her that a visit to the house might reveal something to one intimate with the place.

"There is a way," replied the housekeeper, looking uneasily around her. "I have the key to the rear door." She opened her dress, disclosing a strong, brass key hung to a metal chain which she wore about her neck. "I locked that door with my own hands, and when the key was asked for it was missing, but I knew where to find it."

Virgin Grey grasped the hand that held the key, eagerly exclaiming, "Will you go with me?"

"I will," answered Martha, "but it must be at night."

"What night?" demanded Virgin, trembling with excitement.

"You can fix the time; any night will suit me."

"Then let it be at once; there is not a moment to lose."

"But there are ways and means to be taken into account," said the prudent Martha; "two women can not go a-foot, four miles on a dark night, do any thing and get back to Marshmeadows before daylight."

"We must plan for it, then," suggested Virgin.

"Yes," returned Martha; "there must be a horse, and gig, and——"

"No, not a driver," exclaimed Virgin. "I will drive."

"Well, that will be better; say to-morrow night, then. I will speak for the gig. I want to visit Artey, and that shall be an excuse; we do not care to be seen; we are watched, you know, and it must be after dark."

"Ah, that is a small matter if we can accomplish our object."

"But that may defeat it," said Martha.

"Then we can not be too cautious. I shall be ready and waiting, early, Martha."

The following night was accordingly agreed upon by the two women, and the housekeeper bespoke the gig, as she had promised. It was a moonless night, with just starlight enough to make driving, for the two novices, practicable. When her duties were over for the evening, Martha appeared punctually at the hour agreed upon, and found the vehicle waiting, and Virgin impatient.

"Did you think to bring candles, and matches?" asked the younger woman.

"I have forgot nothing," replied the housekeeper, "and the sooner we are off the better."

Martha Blunt was a short, stout, square-built woman, with a resolute face; her hair was worn back from her forehead; a stiff-brimmed hat, standing collar, and black-stuff dress, increased the masculine cast of her appearance.

"I only need a beard to pass for a man," she said, as she saw her reflection in Virgin's mirror.

"We will both be manful to-night," replied Virgin Grey, "and lion-hearted, until we deliver our friends from this dreadful entanglement."

The road to Brinkwater lay through an open tract of country, for the most part, with but a short stretch of woodland, and the two women drove fearlessly along, talking in low tones of their errand.

"Listen!" exclaimed Virgin, when they had reached the shadow of the wood, and the beating of a horse's hoofs struck on her ear. "Some one is coming behind us."

"They are hardly going to Brinkwater on the same business," replied Martha Blunt quietly; nevertheless, she gave the horse a sharp cut with the whip, which set him off at a pace that soon outstripped the horseman behind them, whoever it migth be, whether friend or foe; for two women alone in the unusual position of a night-journey through the country, on an errand that meant so

much, each with a dread fear at her heart, were less likely to think of a friend than of an enemy.

They reached Brinkwater without any adventure, however, and found the little hamlet locked in sleep; every light was out, and they moved slowly and cautiously through the deserted streets without encountering so much as a baying cur or a belated villager. The homestead once reached, all the rest seemed easy enough. The great stone, ivy-covered mansion loomed black against the starry sky; there was not a sound heard save the sighing of the night-breeze through the pines with that mournful reminder of the sea, and the lapping of the lake upon the beach.

"It looks as though it were dead," said Virgin, with a sigh; for the last time she had visited the place, it was a fête-day, and the house and grounds were illuminated, and gay voices and music filled the air.

Martha Blunt did not stop for retrospection; she fastened the horse and gig in a secluded spot and at once went to the rear of the house, followed by Virgin, and without any difficulty the housekeeper unlocked the door, and the two women entered. Not until they were within the house and had closed the door did they dare to strike a light; and when Martha Blunt had lighted a candle from the store she brought, it revealed the pallid faces of the two fearful women, who involuntarily seized each other by the hand, and for some moments stood irresolute. Unarmed, alone at night, in an iso-

lated and deserted house, in which a mysterious murder had so recently been committed, was a situation trying enough to the nerves of the strongest man; and when she heard a sound of softly-stealing footsteps outside, the terror of Virgin was extreme.

"We have been followed," she gasped, under her breath. Martha Blunt locked the door noiselessly on the inside, then the sound of the footsteps ceased; and persuading themselves that the noise had come from some prowling domestic animal, reassured, but watchful, they went about their quest.

The doors and windows below were carefully scanned; every bolt and lock was examined with the most scrupulous care; then they descended to the cellar, and inspected the heavily grated windows; the blood curdled in their veins, for an instant, when the fiery eye-balls of a predatory cat glared at them through the grating. Convinced by this encounter that they were right in their conjectures about the footsteps heard before, they ended their scrutiny of the cellar fastenings, which they found had been untouched, and mounted the stairs again to continue their search. On entering the library they found the room in the greatest disorder: drawers, desks and cabinets had been opened, and their contents were strewn about the floor. There had been a search evidently for valuable papers, or perhaps the lonely house had been entered by thieves in quest of plunder. This scene naturally excited the

nerves of the already over-wrought women. "If it was thieves, they would have rifled the dining-room," said Martha Blunt, thinking of the silver; "let us go and see." There nothing was disturbed, and the housekeeper readily conjectured who it was that had visited the library; but not wishing to further distress Virgin by telling her that Benedict Strong had been there before them, she made no comment. They went up stairs, each bearing a candle, whose feeble light barely made the darkness visible. At the door of one dread chamber they paused.

"Let us leave *it* till the last," gasped Virgin, whose courage was sinking under the chill horror the place inspired.

"It must be entered first or last," answered Martha, turning, however, and leading the way across the ante-room to Ernest's chamber. In this apartment, sacred to the privacy of her lover, the fears of Virgin were calmed. Here all was beauty, order and peace. The room was filled with the objects dear to a refined and gentle taste; an open book upon the table, a half-smoked meerschaum, a flower drooping in its glass (her flower!) a sheet of paper on his desk, with a pen thrown across it, and bearing only the date of "June twentieth." It seemed to her as though Ernest had just left the room, which was still redolent of his beloved presence. The young girl looked about her tenderly and sorrowfully, her eyes brimming with tears, as she thought of that bright head, which had so lately

pressed the yielding pillows of this luxurious bed, now eclipsed in the gloom of a shameful prison. She stood motionless, hesitating, ashamed to even seem to intrude on the privacy of an absent friend. While Martha Blunt was carefully examining bolts and locks, Virgin thought of the little escritoire, the key of which still hung in the lock. Might there not be papers here that would be valuable to her lover? The desk had been overlooked by the searchers of the library, being in the embrasure of a bay-window, and screened by a *portière*. Virgin seated herself at the desk, and examined every drawer and compartment. She found letters, receipts, college themes, and such various papers as a man accumulates in the course of months, and she was just leaving the desk, after making a compact bundle of its contents, when her eye was caught by a letter that remained in the back part of the drawer, the seal of which had adhered to the velvet lining; she had some difficulty in detaching it, but without any scrutiny, she placed it in the bundle with the other papers, intending to put them in the hands of Ernest Farrell on her return to Marshmeadows.

The tall cheval mirror reflected the slender, willowy grace of Virgin, as she stood waiting on the movements of Martha, in her close-fitting, gray walking dress, with a cap of blue velvet on her charming head; but though her gaze was fixed upon the mirror, she saw not the sweet image pictured on its surface; but in the depths of the glass,

as in water, she saw the face of her lover look forth, his mournful eyes directed toward her. The pathetic picture wavered a moment, and then vanished in a mist of tears. The sudden slamming of a door startled her from the reverie into which she had fallen, and Martha Blunt's abrupt exclamation recalled her to the present with fresh alarm. They knew now to a certainty that some one beside themselves was in the house. Thinking only of themselves, for the moment, they stood with all their souls in their ears, listening. There was no further sound, however, and taking courage of despair they went with timid haste across the hall into the ante-room. Virgin shuddered as she passed the chamber where Joseph Farrell had met his death. "I can not enter that room," she said, with an appealing look at Martha.

"We came here for that purpose," returned the housekeeper, "but we will go into the attic and examine that first." She felt the same reluctance that possessed Virgin to go into this room, but from a very different feeling. They ascended the steep flight of stairs that led to the attic, which covered the entire area of the house, looking carefully at each window. Martha Blunt then mounted the ladder that led to the scuttle opening on the roof. There was not a glass missing or a bolt moved; the scuttle door was fastened from the inside by a heavy staple and hook which were immovable from rust and long disuse. They then crossed the length of the attic, and reached the

dove-cote, which formed a part of the kitchen garret, and was divided from the garret proper by a partition of boards. From lines and hooks were suspended clothing of various kind, which the draught from the open attic door swayed in a ghostly manner, and when from within the dove-cote footsteps were distinctly heard, as in rapid approach, the two frightened women, unable to bear a further strain upon their already over-taxed nerves, rushed back through the attic, and precipitately fled down the narrow steps ; but just as they reached the door below, which had been left ajar, they saw a bright light shining in the hall, and a moment later, a man opened the door of Joseph Farrell's room and stepped into the ante-room. There was just an instant in which the gleam of a pistol was seen in the hands of a powerful man, when human nature, or woman nature, could bear no more, and the two terrified women sank shrieking in a heap on the stairway. The man with the lantern advanced to the door of the attic stairs, and swung it wide open.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT THE SHERIFF DISCOVERED.

THE important business that occupied Sheriff Martin, on the evening of the thirtieth of July, was a night ride to Brinkwater. He had determined to visit the Farrell homestead in person, at night, to investigate the premises in pursuit of his belief in a theory of the murder that should exonerate Ernest Farrell.

He left home early in the evening, on a pretense of professional business, and trotted around the neighborhood of Marshmeadows, "doing up some little chores," as he told the people he met, until night fell, when he struck into the main road that led direct to Brinkwater.

As he rode along in the dusk, he saw, a dozen rods in advance of him, a horse and gig jogging along, and he knew by the jerking and wavering motion of the vehicle, that a woman's hand held the reins. Not wishing to overtake what he supposed were gossiping towns-people, as soon as he reached the shadow of the strip of woods that lay

between the town and village, he halted his horse long enough to allow the gig in advance of him to move out of sight, when he followed slowly behind. He lost sight of the vehicle, however, for in approaching Brinkwater, not wishing to attract attention to his movements, he did not enter the village but passed it to the left, and came up to the Farrell mansion by a detour which led directly to the stables, where he left his horse.

He approached the house stealthily, hoping, if possible, to surprise Artey, the idiot, in one of his nightly rambles. As he walked watchfully around the house, he thought he heard a movement within, and went rapidly to the rear gable, which was covered with a screen of ivy, intending to wait in its dense shadow for the prowler, who he did not doubt was the idiot.

Just as the sheriff reached the corner of the gable, he heard a rapid rustling of the leaves, and saw the figure of a man drop on the grass, bound down the terrace and fly across the park as though endowed with wings. He called in vain to the flying figure, which was soon swallowed in the gloom, and knowing pursuit was useless, he turned back and entered the house with one of the keys which had been placed in his possession. He examined carefully the doors, windows, and shutter-fastenings, and found them undisturbed.

On going into the library he saw the explanation of an order of the court for the possession of

the keys, in a visit of Benedict Strong, evidently in quest of documentary evidence bearing on the case. The sheriff finding no traces of illegal house-breaking, for he considered the act of the prosecutor little less than burglary, ascended the stairway, carefully examining the stair-carpet with the aid of a powerful lantern he had brought, and saw marks of blood on the dark ground of the carpet. He went at once to the room where the murder had been committed, leaving a light in the hall from the supply of candles he had provided.

The room remained just as the coroner had left it. The house and grounds had been committed to the care of the sheriff as soon as the inquest was over. He had tried in vain to have the bloody linen of the bed, in which Joseph Farrell had been murdered, washed, and the room put in order, but no offer of reward could tempt the timid and superstitious washerwomen of Brinkwater to cleanse the horrid garments. There was a feeling, too, that nothing must be touched till after the trial, for fear some precious piece of evidence might be destroyed.

The bed, therefore, was decently veiled by the white counterpane which was spread smoothly over the pillows. The sheriff turned down the covering, disclosing the gory stains, and saw on the under sheet a square greenish mark, which at first sight might have been taken for blood, but which on close inspection, he found to be the impress of a

grass-stain which might have been made by the knee of a man. With his knife he carefully cut out the mark on the sheet, which being toward the middle of the bed, and concealed by the covering, must have escaped the eye of the coroner, and put it in his pocketbook for future reference.

Martin stooped to take up his lantern, which he had set upon the floor while he secured the bit of bed linen, and saw behind one of the large casters, at the back of the bedstead, a small shining object. He went behind the bed and picked it up and discovered, with a bounding heart, that it was a small metal whistle, exactly like the one he had seen in the hands of the idiot.

Here was the precious clew!

The meeting with Artey in the church-yard, the words of the grave-digger, to which he attached no importance, at the time : "the devil gets into him sometimes ; he's wildest when the moon fulls ; he doesn't know what fear is ; he turns night into day," with the recovery of the lost whistle, which the grave-digger had replaced, and the reflection that the boy probably had access to the house at all hours and might have concealed himself there, unknown to the family, flashed upon Martin like a flood of sunlight, and chased from his heart the gloom that had so long brooded there.

"*He did it!*" cried the sheriff, the tears stream-

ing from his eyes ; and falling on his knees, he thanked God it had been granted him to prove the innocence, and secure the safety of his prisoners.

He concealed the evidence he had discovered of the crime, and leaving the room, he locked the door behind him.

How relieved Virgin Grey and Martha Blunt were to find in the stalwart, armed man, who swung open the door of the attic stairway, the friendly sheriff of Marshmeadows, can well be imagined. Martin was a man of great self-control under circumstances where silence and discretion were necessary, and although greatly excited, he suppressed all show of feeling or surprise at seeing the women ; merely remarking, " I thought there was some one else in the house, beside myself."

" How glad I am it is only you, Martin ! " exclaimed Virgin, who had borne as much as her long-tried nerves could endure.

" Who did you think it was ? " asked the sheriff, smiling down on the two pale, frightened women.

" Nobody less than the man that killed Joseph Farrell," replied the housekeeper.

" I only wish it were," said Martin, then, thinking of Martha Blunt as the mother of the criminal, he added, " as far as I am concerned, I mean."

" Ah, I wish it too," sighed Virgin fervently ; con-

tradicting her first greeting to the sheriff, in her relief at seeing an honest man, when she had expected to see an assassin; her lips still quivering with terror at the supposed danger she had escaped. "Have you been in the garret?" she asked Martin, without reflecting that he could not have got down stairs before them, and for the moment supposing the footsteps she had heard there were the sheriff's.

"No," he returned, "I am just on my way there now."

"Then somebody has been there before you," said the housekeeper, "for we heard rapid footsteps, as of some one running away;" though she had not put it in that way before.

"Then, woman-like, you run away yourself," the sheriff said facetiously. He felt a great relief from the mountain of grief and anxiety that had pressed so long upon him.

"It is my duty to see who run and where he has run to," he said, mounting the attic stairs.

He recalled the figure flying through the park, that he did not now doubt was the idiot, who, scared by the light and the voices of the women, had made his escape by the ivy.

The sheriff, followed by Virgin and Martha Blunt, who were afraid to stay below, went up the stairs and made his way across the attic to the wooden partition that divided it from the garret.

He pushed aside the sliding-door, and entered the low garret, stooping and dodging with his head and shoulders the savory bunches of the housekeeper's thrift which dangled from the rafters in many a fragrant cluster, filling the whole place with the delicious, thymy odor of an old-fashioned garden. Martha stopped and began with the instinct of her duty to provide, to fill her arms with the spicy bundles, saying as she did so, "Artey helped"——but she left the sentence unfinished and glanced anxiously at Virgin, who, unmindful of the housekeeper's actions, was watching the sheriff and listening to the flutter and whirring of wings, and the deep melodious cooing of pigeons, as Martin, displacing a loosened board of the partition wall, entered and disturbed with the light the sleeping brood. Martha and Virgin crept through the opening after him, feeling safety only in the presence of their male protector. There was a great tumult among the occupants of the dove-cote at this intrusion, and the noise and confusion covered the action of the sheriff, who, groping around, with the aid of his lantern, discovered in a rapid survey of the premises, an old pair of trowsers rolled up and tossed into a corner under the eaves. He made a small bundle of the garment, which he concealed under the cape of his coat before it could be observed by either of the women. Martin believed the trowsers had been thrown in their hiding-place by the idiot, but he did not wish to distress Martha Blunt with suspi-

cions of her son's guilt until the truth could be verified. Highly gratified with the discoveries he had made, the sheriff led his companions down to the outer door, where he bade them await his return with their vehicle and his own horse.

As he entered the stable his foot struck an object which emitted a clicking sound, and feeling around in the straw that covered it, the sheriff picked up a small, tightly-corked bottle, which, upon opening, he found to contain a remnant of chloroform. "Here is more evidence," he thought, as he placed the bottle in his breast coat-pocket. There was a distinct rustling of the hay overhead, with which the loft was still filled, and remembering the flying figure he had seen, and the footsteps heard by the women in the dove-cote, he felt certain the idiot was lurking about the place, and had taken refuge for the night in the hay-loft. But if the sheriff was right in his conviction that the boy was hiding from him, a thorough search of the stable-loft failed to disclose his whereabouts.

"He has tunneled the hay like a mole, and one might as well look for a needle in a hay-stack," said the baffled sheriff, flashing his lantern about in the vain endeavor to discover the boy's hiding-place: and calling in a tone of authority he bade him come out and show himself; and thinking to allure him by this means he called out, "Your mother is here, and wants to see you, boy." But

there was no response, and all was dead silence again.

The sheriff was now firmly convinced, through the evidence he had, that the idiot was the true criminal. He had not yet had time to think over the proofs he had in his keeping, but he felt assured he held in his hand the long-sought clew, and he determined to follow it up until the whole mystery was unraveled.

The two women remained cowering in the doorway, afraid to stay, or go, and just as the sheriff came up with the horses and gig, a loud, shrill whistle awoke the midnight echoes. Martha Blunt clapped her hands to her ears, turning deathly pale, while Virgin, who felt perfect safety in the sheriff's presence, took her by the arm and led her to the gig. Martin seemed oblivious of the sound, and when Virgin asked what it meant, he made light of it, saying it was only one of the village lads whistling to keep his courage up.

The sheriff rode beside the gig to Marsh-meadows, and saw the women safely housed; then he took charge of the gig and made his way home. Shut within his own house, where all was dark and silent, Martin unrolled the bundle containing the trowsers; they were stained with blood, and had a green mark on the knee. He took from his pocket-book the piece of linen he had cut from the sheet, and found the mark fitted exactly to the mark on the knee of the trowsers.

The sheriff went to bed a thankful man, that night. He had gone to the cell of Ernest Farrell with the good news, but when the light of his lantern fell through the grating upon the young man's beautiful face, he was in a deep sleep : his calm expression betokening a happy dream. "Good news will keep," said the sheriff, turning away. "I will wait till morning. This is the first night I have seen him sleep like that, and he needs it, poor fellow."

But though the sheriff went to bed he could not sleep. He whom sorrow had kept awake so many nights, now could not sleep for joy. The precious clew was surely found ! He knew Martha Blunt's heart would be torn by the revelation, but would it be a revelation ? He believed the woman feared, or suspected something. What was it ? The sheriff turned and tossed on his pillow. "Could it be," he asked himself, "that the idiot had an accomplice ?" Could it be that Agnes Farrell was the instigator of this dreadful deed ? If the housekeeper suspected that her son had a hand in the murder of Joseph Farrell, did she not know that his mental condition rendered him safe from responsibility ? Or was her silence a shield for one who was responsible ? And yet, Martha Blunt's testimony had not screened her mistress. At all events she must be made to tell all she knew.

Toward morning Martin fell asleep, but he awoke long before his wife, with a light and joyous heart.

When Mary Martin opened her eyes it was to see

her husband holding his infant son in his arms, and smiling down upon its little face. "Yes, he does grow, Mary," said the sheriff, "and he looks like his mother, God bless him!"

Martin went down before the household was stirring, to the office of the jail where he had left the trowsers in a bundle on his table. He wished to examine them in the morning-light. As the garment unrolled before him, he saw that they had been made for a much taller person than the idiot; he noticed too, for the first time, that the texture of the cloth was of the finest, and that the trowsers were cut and made in the highest style of the tailor's art. There was a watch-fob, which had evidently been used, and the hip-pocket showed that a pistol had been carried there; they were spattered with mud as though they had been worn in riding on a rough journey. Martin threw the trowsers carelessly over the back of a chair, puzzled what to think of them, when he noticed a name written in black ink on the under side of the reversed pocket. It was the name of Ernest Farrell!

The sheriff staggered under the revulsion of feeling that overwhelmed him. He snatched the trowsers from the chair, and looking around hastily to see that he was unobserved he rolled them up and thrust them into the upper drawer of his secretary. He locked the drawer, and going back pulled at it to see if it was secure. He went out into the air, for the house seemed stifling, but he had gone only

a short distance when he hurried back, and tried the drawer again ; not satisfied with knowing it was locked, he opened it to make sure that the trowsers were within, then relocked the drawer, and put the key in his pocket. How glad Sheriff Martin was that he had not awakened Ernest Farrell from his blissful dream, only to tell him he had discovered another link in the chain of circumstantial evidence ! For how could the sheriff doubt that the blood-stained and muddy trowsers, with the damning green mark on the knee, were worn by Ernest Farrell on the night of his brother's murder. He distinctly remembered to have heard in the village, that on the morning of the day preceding the murder, Ernest had been hunting all day, and returning late and weary, had probably not changed his clothes that evening.

So the chain of evidence the sheriff had so painfully forged, broke and fell from his grasp like water.

The fact of finding the idiot's whistle in the room of the murdered man proved nothing. The boy, under the charge of his mother, had the range of the house; the whistle might have been dropped there long before the murder. The clew had escaped him ; the sheriff was aimlessly wandering again. But if Ernest Farrell were guilty, or not guilty (and the sheriff absolutely, in the face of all proofs, refused to believe him guilty), the prosecution should never know what evidence Samuel Martin held under lock and key. He car-

ried the bundle of papers, forgotten until now, that Virgin Grey had given him the night of the search, to Ernest Farrell, unaware that he was the bearer of good news, that came, alas, too late !

CHAPTER IX.

THE MEETING OF THE PRISONERS.

THIS was the night Sheriff Martin promised Ernest Farrell he should see his mother.

The prison clock struck ten, and yet Martin had not come: had he forgotten his promise? The time dragged heavily to Ernest, as time does to those who anxiously wait.

But the sheriff had been delayed: some business connected with the approaching trial must be attended to; it was half-past ten before he was done.

"I will tell him to-night; it must be put off no longer," said Martin, sinking under the burden he had so long and bravely carried, unlocking the drawer of the secretary, and looking at the fatal garment. "I can bear it no longer. I've done my best to save him, and here is what I've got for my pains. The evidence is damning enough without *them*, and there is enough of it to hang a dozen men." The sheriff took a deep draught from a flask that was kept in the drawer of the secretary,

and used only as a medicine. "But I need it now, if I ever needed it. I must steady my nerves. I am as shaky as a weather-vane. I am unfit for duty; there never was a better time to resign," he hopelessly sighed, "plenty of men are ready enough to step into my shoes to-morrow." He took down his lantern and the bunch of keys that hung beneath the parrot's cage; the bird, hearing the familiar sound of the jingling keys, uttered a croak and rang out its cry of "Murder, murder." "Hush, you green devil!" cried the sheriff, in a passion, "am I to be pursued with that demon cry, forever? It's murder! murder! murder! wherever I go. I will persuade myself pretty soon that *I* have committed a murder." He shook in every fiber as he went tottering down the basement stairs that conducted to the prison cells. Ernest heard the long-expected footsteps, and stood at the grating ready to go out with the sheriff. He noticed the man's haggard face. "His office is not an enviable one," thought Ernest. Martin spoke not a word as he moodily led the way to the cell of Agnes Farrell. When they entered all was quiet as the grave. The tall form of Agnes was stretched upon the low cot beneath a coverlet of white. The full moon, shining through the grated window, threw the shadow of a broad, black cross on her bosom. Her face bore the impress of a sorrow that even sleep could not efface. She could not have looked more truly dead.

"She rests well, at last," whispered the sheriff.

Ernest threw himself on his knees beside her cot. Kneeling there he looked like a fair, young priest ready to render the last sad offices to a passing soul. "Dearest mother," he cried, with tears of anguish filling his eyes, "how changed, how changed she is!"

Agnes woke with a start from her deep sleep and rose in her bed. "Is the dread hour come?" she asked hoarsely, with wildly staring eyes. "I am not ready yet—Oh, my son, my son," she cried as growing accustomed to the glare of light, for the sheriff had set down his lantern as he withdrew, she threw her arms around Ernest's neck and sobbed and moaned upon his bosom. "No, no, I am not ready yet. It *must* not be to-night."

"My precious mother, I am here to comfort and console you; put away all dreadful thoughts; there is no present danger; we will hope every thing from the trial, which is yet weeks away."

"To comfort and console me! Ah, wretched woman that I am! there is no comfort, or consolation for me, forever! Ah, why was I born? Why was I permitted to bring you into the world only to meet this terrible end? Why can not I die?"

"Listen to me, dear mother!" said Ernest, clasping the hands she wrung so wildly, "let me tell you, I have a feeling of certainty that we shall be acquitted. Two innocent people can not be made to suffer for a wrong they did not commit." He

spoke with the resolute calmness of serious conviction.

"Two innocent people; *two* innocent people, Ernest?" She asked the question with an eager anxiousness that startled her son. Could he look her in the face like that and lie! "My God!" he uttered under his breath, "what can she mean? Is her reason gone? Can she have persuaded herself that she did commit the murder, or can she suspect through the awful pressure of the evidence against me, that I,—but no! such a thought is to doubt her love, to doubt her sanity." He gently stroked her fast-whitening hair; she lay composed under his soothing touch with closed eyes and moving lips that uttered no sound. Suddenly she started up; the strained look of agony in her face was piteous to see.

"Ah, I remember now, it was a dream, a hideous dream. It was all so sudden and terrible, that since that awful night I have not been able to separate truth from error." She looked into the noble, sorrowful face bent above her and for a moment doubt doubted.

"Yes, dearest mother," Ernest answered, "it was a wretched dream. In the happy days to come we will look back upon this ordeal as a horrid nightmare which it shall be the duty and pleasure of my life to make you forget."

She did not heed his tender words. The vision of that dreadful scene had seared itself upon her brain and blotted out every other remembrance.

"I thought it was a dream—and then I thought —I thought I saw you go—oh, you must know what I saw—if I did not dream—" She rose to a sitting posture, and seizing his arm shook him rudely. "*Swear*, SWEAR," she shrieked, "that my own eyes deceived me, and it *was* a dream!" He could only think her raving as he held her in his arms, and with a superhuman effort at self-control, soothed her frenzy.

"I saw you—in my dream—" she continued—returning to the one idea that had so long possessed her, "I saw you in my dream, go down the stairs: the gown, the towel, the knife were dripping blood. I called your name—I heard my own voice—oh! oh! oh! my God, *can it be true!*"

He knew the awful truth at last. She believed him to be the murderer of his brother. He saw that in the struggle to solve the mystery that shrouded the crime, knowing her own innocence, this justice-loving spirit had fixed upon him as the only other person who could be accused of the deed, and the belief that her son was the perpetrator of the crime had unsettled her reason.

He must convince her of his innocence if he could. "Mother," he cried passionately, holding her wavering gaze with his steadfast eye. "You have taught me both by precept and example to revere the truth, and I *swear*, by the sacred love I bear you, and another, and as though in the presence of Almighty God, that I went straight to my bed when I left you that dreadful night, and that I

never saw Joseph Farrell again until I looked upon his dead face." She scanned him with her wild eyes as though she would read his inmost soul, then burst into frightful laughter. "I did not see you," she cried hysterically. "I did not call you. I did not say I *saw* you. I *dreamed* I saw you, I dreamed I heard my voice calling you, I—I"—she looked wildly around, and then for an instant, losing all self control, she cried out in a dreadful voice, "I have died, and this is hell."

To reason with a mind distraught was useless. Ernest took his mother in his arms, and rocked and soothed her as one would soothe a terrified child. "You remember, mother," he said in a low, calm voice, "when your Ernest was a little boy, how we walked together in the pleasant meadows of Brinkwater, and beside the lake; how we gathered pebbles, and mosses, and flowers; how one day, I found a wounded bird and brought it home, and healed its broken wing and let it fly to its mate again? You remember my birth-night party when poor little Dick fell in the lake, and I swam in and drew him out? I was a tender-hearted lad, you know, and when Martha cut her wrist with the knife that Artey made so sharp,"—she started up and listened now with breathless interest. "I fainted at the sight of her blood, and every day from hour to hour I have striven never to do a wanton or cruel thing, knowing it would wound you, whom I love so much, and knowing, as you

had taught me, that God's eye was ever upon me. And now when sorrow and shame have overtaken me, through no fault of mine, and your little boy"—her tears were falling fast—"comes to you for help in his extremity as to one who stands nearest his God, *you* will not cast him off, mother?" She sobbed as though her soul would burst from its wretched prison-house. Knowing relief must come with tears, he gently laid her down again. "See, I kneel as I used to at your bedside: your hand was on my little head then, mother"—she laid her hand upon his beautiful bowed head—"and pray, Our Father, who art in heaven, we come to Thee, as to a loving father, for help in this sad time of need. Give us of Thy infinite patience to bear the load of sorrow laid upon us; give us of Thy unfailing strength to await the end. Let no dread phantom of doubt darken the perfect love we bear each other."—She lay still and stark upon her cot with her eyes fixed on the black vaulted ceiling. The struggle was over. Ever after she looked upon it as a temptation, as an evil influence that had grown out of her passionate hatred for the murdered man, that came as his last expression of power over her, to haunt and hound her to destruction. But the light of Ernest's devoted love had banished this horrid specter, and it was laid forever. She spoke in a calm, clear voice at last, as one who had come to life again, after a fearful contest with the powers of darkness. "My dear son,

God has given me peace through you ; nay, do not embrace me, dearest love," she cried, pushing him back with her hands, and flinging herself from the cot, she fell at his feet and clasped his knees. "Ernest," she moaned, "my love for you has been the one ardent love of my life ; you have never given me a single pang; you have from the moment of your birth, been my all in all : the perfect son of an unworthy mother. And yet I have dared to doubt you ! Take pity on my weakness and forgive your sorely tempted mother her unnatural sin. I am happy now, *even here*, and—death, death, though on the scaffold, has no sting now." He lifted her from his feet, thrilled with alarm at the slightness of her form, and placed her on the cot. Her expression from haggard anguish had changed to rapturous joy. "Thank God for this deliverance !" she murmured ; then folding her wasted hands she softly prayed.

"My visit has done you good, dearest mother," said Ernest, seeing through grateful tears the holy joy depicted in her face. "Yes," she answered, with a smile that lighted her wan visage, revealing all the ravages of grief, as the midnight lightning shows the rents in tower and cliff, "yes, now I can sleep, and dream no more." He kissed her fondly many times, arranged her pillows with loving hands, saying, "Now let me do for you, what you have so often done for me when I was your little boy," as he tucked the coverings about her

She put up her arms and drew down his bright head. "*My little boy!* God bless my son. Good-night."

CHAPTER X.

THE TEMPTATION.

THE sheriff rattled the keys impatiently at the door. He had locked the prisoners in the cell, and as he passed back and forth he had caught fragments of the conversation between mother and son that added to the excitement under which he was fast breaking down. He unlocked the door, and as Ernest stepped into the corridor, the sheriff seized him by the arm and led him in a direction away from his cell. They stopped before a great iron door, which the sheriff opened, disclosing the prison-yard. Ernest followed him mechanically, still too much under the influence of the recent interview with his mother to know whither he was going, until he breathed the fresh air outside, and felt the space of the spanning heaven above him. He drew himself up with a feeling of unconscious delight, but before he could recover himself sufficiently to ask the sheriff the meaning of this unusual act, Samuel Martin swung his lantern wildly aloft in the air, crying: "The world is as free to you, as to me, Ernest Farrell; *Fly!* FLY! for your life!"

The young man darted a look of amazement at Martin; then grasping him by both arms he exclaimed: "Do you tempt me, sheriff?"

"No, I do not tempt you; I give you your liberty. I believe you are an innocent man, but I can not prove it, and you must go, *go!*"

"It is impossible, Martin," said Ernest Farrell sadly. "I would not leave my mother if I could go. Flight is a confession, and it would be only the flight of the tethered bird; the law holds me."

"But do you know what will happen if you stay, boy? Do you not know that the chain of evidence is complete and damning? I have in my possession the very trowsers you wore the night of the murder, spattered with your morning's ride, and your brother's blood; and the stain on the knee is printed on the bed he was murdered in. I found them concealed in your dwelling. You will be hung by the neck until you are dead, dead!" The sheriff, in his frenzy, seized the young man and shook him roughly. "*Hung*, I say, HUNG!"

"What can you mean, man," cried Ernest, pointing to his person; "these are the trowsers I had on the night of my brother's murder."

"Prove it! prove it! and you are saved," shrieked the sheriff.

'That can easily be done!" exclaimed Ernest, with that feeling of relief the smallest ray of hope brings to the despairing. "A half-dozen people will testify to the truth of this."

"Yes, and Benedict Strong will bring a dozen

people who will swear that you had on the trowsers that are locked in my secretary, stained with your brother's blood, your name written on the watch-fob, that the watch you carry will fit, and the mark of your pistol on the hip-pocket ; it is another link in the chain of evidence that's going to hang you, and your——"

"Stop ! for God's sake, Martin ! do not mention the name of my mother in that connection. This is simply monstrous, that a man is allowed, by law, no chance for his life. I will not believe it."

"Account for them, then ; account for the bloody garment with your name written in plain letters on the pocket, to Benedict Strong, if you can !"

"I can not account for the blood upon the trowsers, but I tell you we hold in our hand the clew that must unravel this dreadful mystery. Let us go on till we find the guilty man who *can* account for it."

"I have been going on until I have made matters worse and worse, and I see no way out of the web in which we all are entangled. We shall be killed like flies, and that venomous spider, Benedict Strong——"

"You are raving, Martin," interrupted Ernest, gently turning the sheriff about and leading him back to the prison. "Come in," he said, "and sit down ; you are burning with fever." He seated the distracted man on his cot, who buried his face in his hands. Of the two men, Samuel Martin looked like the one condemned.

"Ah, there's a long story of my own, back of this of yours, Mr. Farrell," groaned the sheriff. "I have been trying to get away from it, and forget it, but it has come home to me at last."

"Tell me your sad story, Martin," said Ernest, hoping to quiet the excited sheriff, by leading him to think and talk of something beside the desperate case that haunted and baffled him. "I am in a position to sympathize with the wretched, if man ever was, and I will help you if I can."

"No, no, you can not help me," sighed Martin; "what has been done can not be undone, and I must bear it; it will end some time. I do not know what is going to happen to me, Ernest Farrell: I know I am a broken man, but whatever does happen, remember I was your friend to the last, and believed you were innocent. I have tried, with all my poor, human powers to help you, and I have asked God's pity and direction, but it has all come to naught. Innocent men have been hung before," the sheriff continued, in a soliloquizing tone, as he thrust his fingers through his hair, and dropped his face in his hands. "Life is not worth much, at the best. He who sees the beginning from the end, knows why such things must be. Poor fellow! poor fellow!"

Never had Ernest Farrell felt the sting of utter despair until he saw his only friend give way to hopeless dejection. "You give up all hope?" at last, he said in a faltering voice.

"It is cruel to add one feather's weight to the

burden you already bear, Ernest Farrell—but I will never give up all hope," after a pause he added, "while you and I live, and I believe I shall go to my account long before you are called to yours."

"Can you think of nothing to be done, Martin, to break this hideous spell that holds us all?" Ernest Farrell had not known till this moment how he had clung to the sheriff's stubborn hope. When that broke down the earth seemed to be slipping from under his feet. The sheriff's worn face lighted for an instant with a feeble smile.

"Here is all that can be done," he said, fumbling in his breast-pocket and drawing out the phial containing the opium that he had carried so long untouched. "There is enough for two," he said simply. The young man drew back in horror. "You are indeed without hope," he said.

"I am desperate, Ernest Farrell," replied the sheriff, "and I believe through this black drug lies your only door of escape." He placed the phial mechanically in Ernest's hand, who received it involuntarily as he stood with pallid face and fixed gaze staring at the sheriff.

"Oh, I can not bear to have you look at me like that, Ernest Farrell; it seems like your accusing spirit," cried the sheriff, turning aside his head.

"I do not accuse you," answered Ernest in a voice so different from his own, the sheriff turned to see if another stood beside them. "I know too

well the meaning of that awful word, God help us both!"

The sheriff wrung his prisoner's hand. "It has come to that, Mr. Farrell; only God *can* help us."

CHAPTER XI.

THE CLEW.

SAMUEL Martin could not keep away from the spot where the murder had been committed. He haunted the place like a spirit doomed to revisit the scenes of its guilt and sorrow. He had made almost daily journeys to the house, which he watched with an intense and wistful interest. His appearance was much changed; from the hale, ruddy, upright man he was before the murder, he had grown thin, sallow, and stooping. His face wore a haggard, anxious look, and his manner had changed from its habitual, gentle dignity to morose petulance. Toward Denby, the grave-digger, alone did he show any of his former kindliness. They sat on the tombstone a good deal in the summer afternoons and talked of the desperate case. One day it occurred to the sheriff to question Denby about the idiot's lost whistle which the grave-digger had replaced.

"About what time did you give Artey that whistle, Denby; was it before or after the murder?"

asked the sheriff in an abstracted sort of way; for since the finding of the trowsers the sheriff had given up the idea of the idiot's complicity in the murder.

"Oh, it was nigh upon the time of the murder," Denby replied, with no notion of what was in the sheriff's mind. "I remember he came whistlin' around when I was diggin' Joseph Farrell's grave, and I wanted to choke him; he's got no respect fur any thing livin' or dead."

The sheriff started up with sudden energy and left the grave-digger without a word.

"Samuel Martin's takin' that case hard," said Denby, as the sheriff, with bowed shoulders, wended his way through the church-yard. "If 'twas his own son he couldn't take more interust. I wonder where Dick Martin's took hisself off to? They say he went to sea: he's been gone long enough to be caught a dozen times."

Martin went straight from the church-yard to the Farrell mansion. The place, seen near at hand, and in the clear morning light, wore the dilapidated look of an heir-at-law. The gates swung open; the walks were grass-grown; weeds grew where carefully-tended flowers once bloomed; and the wealth of honeysuckle and roses that covered the verandas had cast their burden of beauty and fragrance to the ground; the spider had spun a marvelous web across the threshold, and no foot-steps had brushed the freshness of the grassy lawn.

The sheriff had but one idea in his mind when he left Denby, and that was to intercept the idiot, and if possible get from him some clew to the murder, which he now really suspected the boy could, if rightly approached, furnish. He had often seen Artey in the neighborhood of the premises, but he had never yet found him within the grounds, unless the flying figure of his midnight quest had been the idiot's. Now Martin's heart bounded, when, as he drew near the house, he saw the boy clambering up the ivy that covered one of the rear gables to the roof, like a cat creeping to its prey, and disappear through an opening in the gable concealed by the ivy. He went at once to the spot and found the vine, a very old and powerful stock, the body of which was several inches in diameter, covering with its vigorous branches the entire gable, thus concealing any aperture that might be above. Martin placed his foot on the lower branches and essayed to climb, but a man weighing nearly two hundred pounds could not go where a light and more agile person would be safe. He waited silently at the foot of the ivy, and shortly a white cloud of pigeons flew from within and dispersed themselves on the eaves of the house. The idiot soon emerged with a small bag in his hand, and lightly descending, blew a call on his whistle, and began to scatter the contents of the bag, evidently some kind of seed, which brought the pigeons in a flock to the ground, where they swarmed around

the boy, feeding from his hand, and lighting on his head and shoulders in the most friendly manner.

"There are some things that love him beside his mother," thought the sheriff, as he approached the spot where the pigeons were feeding.

The boy, seeing the sheriff for the first time, flung out his arms with an upward movement, and the pigeons dispersed as quickly as they had collected. He turned and was moving rapidly away, when the sheriff's commanding, "Halt!" stopped him.

Not wishing to frighten the idiot, who already held him in sufficient awe, but to conciliate and win his confidence, for he knew his dark and crooked mind could be approached only by kindness, the sheriff said gently, "The pigeons seem to like you, Artey."

"The pigeons are behaving themselves," returned the idiot, remembering the words of the grave-digger in the church-yard, where he had last seen the sheriff.

He edged away with a furtive look at Martin.

"Yes, I see they are very well-behaved pigeons. And I like pigeons, too."

"Did you ever ride a race with the devil?" asked the idiot, cunningly, changing the conversation and moving away from the vicinity of the dove-cot.

"Well," replied the wary sheriff, "I may have to yet. You have, I know."

The idiot darted a quick glance at the sheriff's face, and seeing nothing there to excite apprehension, answered, "Yes, I have, 'twas the night I lamed the bay filly."

"And the owner of the bay filly walloped you?" returned the sheriff, without much thought of what he was saying.

"He did, curse him!" growled the idiot.

"And who was the owner of the bay filly?" asked Martin, only thinking to keep the boy's tongue going.

"Do you know the moon is the old hen that hatches the stars?" was the answer the sheriff got.

"Does she hatch the pigeons up yonder, too?" making a backward motion of his head in the direction of the dove-cot. He saw at once by the lowering look of the boy's face that the subject of the pigeons was one not to be trifled with. Reflecting a moment, Martin added, with the hope of allaying the idiot's fears that he had any unfriendly intentions toward his comrades, "I have more pigeons than you can shake a stick at. I will give them all to you, if you want them."

The confidential tone the sheriff had assumed soothed the suspicions of the boy who, now alive with childish interest, eagerly asked, "Are they white?"

"Some of them are white, some black, some gray

and one is green," said the sheriff, with a sudden inspiration, "and it talks."

"I will take the green one," cried the delighted idiot; "what does it say?"

The sheriff knew the time had come to make a bold move; he had tried persuasion, he must now try what fright would do. Seizing the idiot roughly by the arm, he cried in a terrible voice, "The green pigeon says, Murder! Murder! Murder! He did it! He did it! He did it! Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!"

The idiot, with fear pictured in his face, shuddered in every fiber. "Let me go!" he shrieked, struggling in the sheriff's powerful grasp. "I do not want the green pigeon."

"But," said Martin, in a deep, sepulchral voice, "the green pigeon wants *you!*"

The terror of a hunted soul, brought to bay, glared from the idiot's eyes. With the joy that a long-sought discovery brings, Martin knew that at last he held in his hand a solution of the awful mystery. The boy was speechless, ashen, and shaking with terror.

"I know what you know," said the sheriff, "and you might as well make a clean breast of it."

"I don't know any thing," whimpered the idiot, "and I promised not to tell," he added, illogically.

"If you do not tell me I will have the owner of the bay filly wallop you again," threatened the sheriff, little thinking who the owner was.

The idiot's manner changed in a moment from cringing fear to open defiance. "He's dead," he cried, "and can never beat me again."

"*Who killed him?*" roared the sheriff, with his hand on the idiot's throat.

"I don't know who killed—any body," after a pause. "I don't know—I promised—I will never tell."

The boy had fallen on his knees and was striving to wriggle out of the sheriff's grasp. "Get up, you miserable coward, and come with me," said the sheriff, jerking the idiot to his feet and dragging him toward the stables where he had left his horse and gig. The boy, by a sudden movement, broke from the sheriff's hold, and darting toward the house sprang upon the ivy, and in a moment more disappeared through the orifice in the gable, and was lost to the sheriff's eager eyes.

"He has escaped me this time," thought the disappointed sheriff, as the boy did not re-appear; "and I have forgotten the keys, and can not chase him through the house, where I suppose he has hidden."

The sheriff essayed to climb the ivy, but as he saw the boy's head protrude from the window, and dodge back at sight of him again, he made a feint of going away. He did not go far, however, but returned noiselessly and crouched behind the corner of the house, from whence he

could hear any movement made by the boy. Presently he heard a rustling of the ivy, and pounced upon the idiot just as he sprang to the ground, who, at his unexpected capture, filled the air with his outcries.

"Now, I have you, and you don't get away again in a hurry," cried the sheriff, grasping the boy's arm like a vise; "the owner of the bay filly is dead and can not beat you, but the Sheriff of Claire County is alive yet and able to give you a thrashing every day in the week."

"Beat me," cried the idiot. "I will be beat, but I will never tell, for he"——the boy stopped as in fear of saying something that would compromise him. "Beat me, I say."

Worn-out in his combat with the stubborn temper of the idiot, Martin dragged him to the stables; the boy resisting at every step; and buckling a strong leathern strap about the idiot's waist, he fastened the other end to his own arm, while he unhitched and led out the horse.

"Did the owner of the bay mare beat you here, Artey?" asked the sheriff, hoping to draw him out by the power of association.

"He is dead, and he will never beat me again," the idiot answered doggedly.

"Joseph Farrell would never have beaten you if you had not deserved it," said the sheriff, assuming the knowledge that it was the murdered man who had beaten the boy.

"He is dead and will never beat me again," reiterated the idiot.

"You mean Joseph Farrell will never beat you again?" said the sheriff.

"Yes, he's buried deep, *deep*. I saw Jim Denby dig the grave."

"And Jim Denby gave you a new whistle, when you lost the old one in Joseph Farrell's room."

"I don't know where I lost the old one. I lost the old one, and Jim Denby gave me a new one. I like the new one best."

"Would you not like the old one, too?"

"The old one is lost."

"But I know a man who found it in Joseph Farrell's room, after the murder."

The idiot turned quickly away.

"I will give it to you if you will tell me who was with you in the room that night, and who hid the trowsers in the dove-cot?"

"The trowsers were mine: mammy gave them to me. I will never tell—any thing—he swore he would kill me, if I told."

"*Who* swore he would kill you?" gasped the sheriff, turning deadly pale, and looking as though he would sink to the ground. "I will not let him kill you."

The idiot, seeing the awful pallor of the sheriff's face, cried out, "Oh, you are afraid of him too, ha! ha! ha! he will kill us both, if we tell."

Samuel Martin felt his strength exhausted; he

was no longer able to cope with the capricious idiot. He meant to take the boy home with him and place him under the influence of his mother, of whom he was very fond. She, no doubt, would be able to coax from him the knowledge it was evident he possessed. But would she be willing?

The journey home was a silent one; Martin drove along lost in anxious thought, a gnawing pain sat at his heart. He had longed to find and help his out-lawed boy. Though he had satisfied, as far as money could satisfy, the crime his son had committed, yet there was an indictment against him and a reward offered for his apprehension. It would become his own duty, if the fugitive should come within his jurisdiction, to arrest him, and give him over to the mercy of the law. Would he come back? Ay! *had* he come back? He had dared to hope for his return once; dare he hope for it now? For two years, in every man that looked behind him as he walked; or turned a listening ear to following footsteps; in every skulking shape the evening gloom disclosed; in every hastening figure flying like one pursued; the wretched father saw his wretched son. The sheriff of Claire County was himself a prisoner of love and sorrow; the love and sorrow that was born when his son was born; the love and sorrow that is as old as the first man and the first woman; together they walked the streets with him, sat at his daily board, and pressed his nightly pillow; struggle to free him-

self as he might, they held him fast and would not let him go.

The idiot, pleased with the idea of soon seeing his mother, sat quietly beside the sheriff, who held the leather strap with a vigilant hand, and only released it when the boy, holding to his mother's skirts, was pouring out his love and joy, forgetting all else in the pleasure of seeing her.

She is his mother, thought the sheriff, and loves where, to others, there seems little to love.

"Keep him by you, Martha," he said; "he has been trespassing, and there is no knowing what mischief he may do, or what harm will come to him. Do not let him out of your sight, I charge you. I must have some conversation with you to-night, upon an important matter. I will not put your boy in jail, but I will hold you responsible for him."

Martha Blunt heard the sheriff's charge in silence; she needed no warning; she took her son to her own room and locked him in.

Samuel Martin wanted no supper, that night, he told his wife: he was too tired to eat, he said, and he had some writing that must be done at once. He opened his secretary and sat with the paper before him; he meant to write a note to Edward Lawrence, Ernest Farrell's attorney, and put him in possession of the facts he had discovered; but his ideas were so confused, that he got up and walked the floor to collect them. "I can not write," he said, "my head is as thick as a cart-wheel. I will see Lawrence to-morrow, and let

him know every thing." He went back, with an alarmed feeling, to the secretary, and took out the package containing the trowsers, leaving the desk open, and the keys hanging in the lock ; he took up his bedroom candle and went up to his room. He had a confused idea that he was going down into the basement to visit the prisoners, as usual, but when he saw his bed all thoughts of any thing but an uncontrollable desire to rest, deserted him. He looked at the bundle in his arms wonderingly, but the thought of his prisoners still possessed him ; he raised the heavy mattress, and laid the cherished package upon the slats, saying, "They will be safe there till morning," and dressed as he was, he threw himself wearily on the bed, and sunk into a heavy sleep.

Mrs. Martin coming up an hour later found her husband in this condition. "How tired he is. Poor Samuel!" she said, touching him gently. "Wake up, father, and take off your clothes ; you look so hot and uncomfortable." The sleeping man started up wildly and looked with unseeing eyes at his wife.

"I didn't do it," he cried excitedly ; "he didn't do it ; who did do it, Mary?" he recognized the gentle presence, at last.

"You are dreaming, Samuel ; you must not think so much about this murder ; it is wearing you out."

"Yes, I know, I know ; where am I? Did you say who did, it Mary?"

"We are not sure yet who did it, father; go to sleep now, and we will talk of that to-morrow."

"To-morrow"—repeated the sheriff in a half conscious tone, and then his troubles were only remembered in dreams.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RETURN OF THE FUGITIVE.

AFTER the sheriff's wife had seen her husband comfortably in bed, she went down stairs to fetch the infant she had left sleeping in its cradle. Martha Blunt had fastened the house, as usual, and all below was silent.

The thick stone walls of the sheriff's house rendered a fire, even in summer, necessary for the safety of the young infant, and Mary, taking up the sleeping child, seated herself beside the fire with it on her lap to have a quiet hour of self-communing. Her thoughts, at first, were occupied with her husband, he seemed so tried and worn when she helped him to take off his clothes. She was not alarmed at his condition, however, which she attributed to mental worry and fatigue. Then her thoughts came back to the infant which stirred and smiled in its sleep. She was thinking now of another infant, her first-born. Where was he this summer night? She recalled his innocent

baby beauty; the little dimpled hands pressed against her soft bosom; the eyes of love that looked upward to her own; then the small white-clad figure, at her knee, with folded palms, and wistful, questioning gaze; next the rosy, romping boy, eager for sport and mischief. Every detail of his young life was recalled with tender remembrance. And he was gone! the thought that she knew not where, wrung her heart with keenest anguish. She remembered his catching a fly, one day, and holding it clasped in his sturdy fist, as she opened each resisting finger, one by one, telling him that God would be grieved by any cruel act, and his laughing face grew grave, as he opened his hand and let the prisoner go. How glad she was to think he had not killed the fly! Her warm tears fell on the sleeping babe; she took its tender feet into her loving palm, "God grant," she prayed, "that these little feet may never go astray!"

There was a sharp, clicking sound, as of glass cracking, and Mary turned quickly, her heart in her throat. The window opened on the small grass-plat of the inner court she called her garden, but the sound ceased, and she turned away again. Presently a low voice at the window sighed, "Mother, mother!"

Who ever lifts that cry in vain to living mother's ears? All her soul was listening now as she leaned toward the window. Could she have been

deceived? Was it Dick, who, perhaps, far away had died, and his passing soul breathed this sigh of farewell as she sat there dreaming of him? She thought of that mysterious tie which links the unborn infant to its mother; was there not also a spiritual tie between the mother and her child, that time nor distance—ay, that crime itself, could not sever!

The cry was repeated, in a voice she could not mistake. "Mother, mother, let me in!"

In an instant the door was unlocked and opened, and Dick Martin was in his mother's arms.

"I always told your father you would come back, Dick," she cried through her happy tears. "I knew my heart spoke truly and you would answer it. How pale and thin you are!" Her searching gaze devoured every feature of his wasted, altered face. "You have been ill, my love, and oh, who has abused you?" she cried, tracing with shrinking fingers, a long, red welt across his thin cheek.

"Yes, I haven't been much else than sick, mother; we must give and take in this world," he answered, thus dismissing her allusion to his injury. Then, with a frightened glance around the room, he asked in a hurried whisper, "Where's father?"

"Your father is in bed and sleeping soundly. You need not be afraid of him, Dick."

"He's Sheriff of Claire County now," Dick an-

swered, with a nervous laugh, "and I'm *wanted* you know."

A cloud of anxious sorrow veiled the mother's tender face. "Oh, Dick, my child, how did you ever come to do it?" Tears were in her eyes and in her voice.

"It's a long story I have to tell," the boy said evasively. "I am almost starved; give me something to eat, mother."

"My darling boy!" cried Mary Martin in a tone of keen self-reproach. "You hungry, and the house full of victuals! Oh Dick," she continued, as she set the best the house afforded before him, "I have never lifted a morsel to my lips in these two years you've been away, that the thought that you were unfed and suffering has not imbittered every mouthful of food and choked me."

"Ah, mother," replied Dick, as he devoured the victuals she placed before him with the eager haste of ravenous hunger. "I'm afraid I've imbittered your life forever."

"No, no, do not think that, Dick; you have grievously sinned I know, my son, and you must pay the penalty, I fear, but it is far better to do this and become a penitent man, as I trust you will, than to remain an outlaw and a fugitive from justice."

The boy, a handsome, delicate looking youth of twenty-one or two, with restless eyes and irresolute mouth, darted a look of apprehension at his mother as she uttered these words.

"Do you mean to give me up?" He started from his chair as though he meant to fly.

"Richard!" she almost shrieked, "do you think the mother who bore you could do you a harmful thing?"

He ran quickly to the door that opened on the stairway, and locked and bolted it. "I tell you, mother, you must hide me." His wild and hunted eyes swept the room as though in quest of refuge. "I have dodged around here skulking and starving like a homeless cur, until I believe I have got my death."

He fell into a fit of coughing that racked his slender frame to its center, and found an echo in every fiber of Mary Martin's loving heart. In a moment she clasped him in her arms as though in this safe shelter she would shield him from all the evil of the world.

"Do you love me so, still, mother?" cried Dick, holding her at arm's-length, and seeing in the love and pity painted in her face a revelation to his wayward soul. "If I had known how true and good you were I might never have left you; but I took it all as a matter of course and went away in search of happiness—I never found," he added, after a moment's pause.

"Yes, Dick, happiness is often so near us that we do not see it, and overstep it to pursue a shadow that ever eludes us. I am glad you turned and came back to me, dear."

"But, oh, mother, the shadow pursues *me* now,"

said Dick in an awe-struck whisper. Turning from his wild-eyed fear Mary Martin half expected to see the dread Nemesis that pursued her son, but her eyes fell on the infant sleeping in its cradle; the gentle presence filled her with peace; was not this other her offspring also?

"There, there is nothing to harm you," she said in that soothing tone one uses to a frightened child. "Your mother will keep and care for you."

"I have something to tell you before I go, mother," Dick answered, re-assured by her calm maternal voice. "You must manage to keep me awhile." He looked around him at the massive walls. "The jail is my only home now," he said, with a desperate attempt at raillery. Mary Martin looked upon her son with pitying eyes. If he had come home but to die how glad she was to do the little that could be done for him. Every pore of her heart bled inwardly at the sight of his haggard face and at that cruel, recurring cough. But she did not wish to alarm Dick by any word or sign of anxiety about his condition.

"Come, dear," she said, "I will take you to the spare-room; it is nice and quiet there and I will nurse you back to health and hope again. Your father's house is yours, Dick, and the best there is in it; and you must not talk of going away again unless it be some time to a home of your own."

"Father must not know," said Dick, with that haunted look that all the wretched have.

"Father need not know, Dick, till you get well and strong."

"You will not betray me, mother?" his arm was about her waist, and the old, fond look was in his young, blue eyes.

"Oh, Dick! did a good mother ever betray her child. How can you doubt me? See," she said, pointing to the sleeping infant, "it came to comfort me when my heart was breaking."

The young man stooped over the cradle and stretched out his hands as though he would raise the infant form, then suddenly withdrew as if the thought that its purity might be polluted by his touch, had repelled him.

"You need not fear to wake him," said the mother; "he sleeps well."

"He has a full stomach, and a good conscience, no doubt. What a pity I had not died when I was in my cradle."

Mary Martin took up the child, and bade Dick precede her with the candle. She had thought herself, a hundred times, how content she would have been, how much better for him, if her darling first-born had died in his infancy, and of the many illnesses she had nursed him through, and had groaned in spirit at the thought that he might have died, and did not. She led her son to a room on the second floor, remote from her own chamber. She gave him fresh linen, and when he laid his

head on the pillow she stooped and kissed him good-night. Then, for the first time, he showed emotion and broke into violent weeping. His mother smoothed the hair from his forehead, her own eyes streaming with a heart too full for words. "Oh, mother, mother, if I had never left you!" he cried, in an outburst of remorse, as a flood of tender recollections rushed across his soul.

"You have come back, my son, repentant, I trust, and there is a deep joy to me in this," said his mother, wiping away his tears. "Sleep, now; you are always on my mind, and I shall be ever near you."

She locked the door, as she went out, putting the key in her pocket, and with the now awakened baby she paced the corridor back and forth, too deeply excited to sleep.

Mary Martin felt she was right in keeping her son's presence a secret from her over-wrought husband, who, with his stern sense of justice, would feel that he must give up the criminal and satisfy the law. The laws were made by men, she thought; if they had been made by women they would be more discriminating. At all events, the law of a mother's love was God-given, and she would abide by that and shield and save her son if she could. Martha Blunt, who had just come from the room where her son was confined, met the sheriff's anxious wife in the corridor. Both women started as if they had been caught in a criminal act. "Come, Martha, I want to speak to you," said Mary

Martin, leading the way to a small sitting-room at the end of the corridor. She knew this woman well, and had found her heart and judgment sound. "Dick has come back," she said, without hesitation or reluctance. "I can trust you, Martha?"

"I am here to be trusted," replied the housekeeper, bluntly.

"I know that, Martha; I do trust you. You have the keys of the house; keep his room locked," said the sheriff's wife, giving the housekeeper the key of the door of the room Dick occupied. "His father need not know—yet," she continued. "Dick is very ill, I fear, and we must bring him around with good nursing and good food, Martha, until he is able to appear, you know."

"I will do my best to serve you, Mrs. Martin. My own son was brought to this roof to-night, and our interests are equal."

"Has Artey been getting into trouble?" asked the sheriff's wife, all sympathy.

"The sheriff said something about his trespassing, and promised to speak further of it, but I have not seen him since."

"Poor husband! he has gone to bed dead-tired, and forgot it, I suppose. Do not trouble over it, Martha; it must have been a small matter. I am glad Artey is with you; we women feel responsible for the conduct of our children; when Dick went wrong, poor boy, I felt myself as guilty as he."

"And I have a double responsibility in my unfortunate son," said Martha Blunt.

There were three people who slept well under the sheriff's roof that night—the infant, the idiot, and the fugitive.

CHAPTER XIII.

MOTHER AND SON.

WHEN Mary Martin rose, after a sleepless night, she found her hands full to overflowing—a wailing infant, a sick husband, and a son whose secret she must keep, and whose person she must conceal from the eye of the law. The sheriff was ill with brain fever, the doctor said, and must be kept as quiet as possible ; he was a very sick man, and it would take careful nursing and wise treatment to bring him through. The doctor showed the sincerity of his opinion by asking for counsel. The sick sheriff was delirious from the first moment of his seizure ; he talked continually of what had so long preyed upon his mind. The clew he had grasped fell from his nerveless hand. His anxious and troubled face expressed the utmost apprehension.

" I—I had it, doctor, but it slipped—oh, yes—*I* know, I locked, I locked the—oh, I thought I had —where, where, where are——"

The eager, questioning look in his face was painful in its intensity.

"What did you have, Martin?" the doctor asked, thinking to ease the sick man's mind by an answer that would, perhaps, satisfy him.

The sheriff fixed his troubled eyes on the doctor's face, and seemed to strive for a moment to collect his thoughts. "The clew, you know: there it goes, way up on the gable." He followed an imaginary thread with his wavering gaze. "I can not reach it," he said, with a hopeless sigh, clutching at the empty air.

"I will get it for you," returned the doctor, making a feint to bring down the object that floated before the patient's distracted vision; "there, I have it; I will tie it to my coat button, and it can not escape."

"Escape! no, he will not escape," exclaimed the sheriff, wildly; the new idea being only another form of the old one that filled his weary mind. "He won't, no, no! What was I saying, doctor? I was saying—there, it goes again, that cobweb! See! See! Oh, that string in the air; if it would only keep still I could catch it!" He clutched in vain at the wavering illusion. The doctor plucked a strand from the ball of worsted lying at hand in Mary Martin's work-basket, tied it to the button of his vest, and put the other end in Martin's eager hand. The sick man's attention, attracted for a moment, fixed itself on the object he touched; he

grasped it with a jerk, and the thread broke in his hand. "It's nothing but a string of damned blue yarn," said the sheriff, looking wonderingly at the doctor, who laughed, in spite of himself, at this glimpse of reason.

"It's no laughing matter, doctor," said poor Martin, turning sadly on his pillow, and muttering his doubts and fears again. . . .

Mary Martin's anxious thoughts were divided between her sick husband and her ailing son.

"Is father very sick? Will he be up to-day?" Dick asked with anxious concern.

"You need not fear your father now, my son, he is very ill."

"Mother, do you think I am very sick?"

"Not so sick as your poor father, Richard."

"Does the doctor come to see father?"

"Oh, yes, Dick, there are two of them."

"Will you not let one of them come to see me?" asked Dick, with solicitude brooding in his boyish eyes.

"Do you wish it, my son? do you think you are very sick?"

"I am so weak, mother. I told you about the hemorrhage I had, didn't I?"

"The hemorrhage, Richard! Have you had a hemorrhage?" cried Mary Martin, now really alarmed, "I will call the doctor at once."

"Bring Doctor Grantly, mother, he is a good man; he won't peach on me! Don't you know,

you said he saved my life when I had scarlet fever?"

"Yes, he did, he did," sighed the mother, remembering how many times she had wished Dick had died when he was little and innocent. The boy saw the trouble in her face, and calling her to his bedside he drew her down and kissed her.

"You won't let me die, will you, mother?"

"Oh, Dick! if you would get well, and become a good and useful man, I would pray on my knees, day and night, for your recovery."

"Mother, won't you pray that I may get well, and —and be good?"

"Do you repent, Dick, of the wrong you have done?"

"What do you mean by repent, mother?"

"Turning away from the evil and being sorry for it, dear."

"Oh, yes, no good has ever come of it. I have turned away from it; I am sorry. I wish I hadn't done it. Since I came home, and have seen you, and the baby, I seem to have had a glimpse of heaven, where all is peace and love. You do not know, mother, how much evil a bad boy finds in the world, and the awful temptations that come to him from without and from within. It is so hard when passion and inclination drive a fellow on, to know what is right, or to stop and think about it, until it is too late. You see the prize, or what looks like it, you want it so much, and the devil within

you cries go on, go on, till you have no will but his."

"But, Richard, there is a good angel ever ready to counsel you——"

"Yes, mother, I know; but sometimes my good angel, it always wore your look, mother, covered its face and turned——Oh, I can not talk, or think about it now—I must get well first. I will get well, won't I, mother? If I do, I will atone for all the sins I have committed I am so young! You have helped me in a strait before; you will take good care of me. Doctor Grantly always said you were such a good nurse."

"My dear child, I will do my utmost to nurse you back to health, I could not do otherwise, and I am so glad to have you with me, even if it is on a sick bed."

"Now I feel better, mother; bring the baby, and let him lie beside me. I will not hurt him, and I can watch him for you while you attend to father. Mother, you're not afraid of me, are you?"

"Afraid of you, Dick! what do you mean, dear?"

"Why, you think there is some good in me; a fellow's mother always thinks that, don't she?"

"A mother always feels that her child, no matter how old, or how sinful he may be, Dick, is a part of herself. When you ran off, my poor boy, I felt that, like the Israelites of old, you were the scapegoat that carried my sins from me into the wilder-

ness. I became a better woman after my sorrow, and grew more charitable toward the erring, and for all who suffered. And I blamed myself, too : I feared I had not given you the care and training I ought to have done. I did not think *my* little boy could go astray. Your baby-sister came and was so delicate, that I think I made an idol of her, and neglected you, Dick, and let you get too far away from me. You must forgive me, dear."

"Forgive you, mother? you are goodness itself! And I have come back to you, so I can not be wholly bad, though I sinned, knowing it would grieve you. I think that thought was ever present with me. But I never can tell just how I came to do it. Oh, mother, I am afraid to go to sleep at night for the dread that I will die before I wake, and the world will never know—*mother!*"—it was a cry of agony that came from the boy's inmost heart; "say, now, that whatever wrong I may have done you will forgive me!"

She was kneeling at his side, and grateful tears streamed from her eyes.

"Oh, God," she cried, "Thou see'st the hearts of all men; as I hope for forgiveness from Thee, as I hope for the forgiveness of the son of my body, so do I freely and fully forgive him."

"Now, mother, that you have forgiven me all, and have promised to pray for me, I can ask God to forgive and pity me."

"He will, my son, if your heart is contrite and broken."

"It is all broken up, mother; when I did—the last thing—it seemed to me the devil that raged so long in me flew away and left my soul a black and empty ruin; then my good angel came back and whispered, 'Go home, go home,' and I thought it was your voice that called me, and I came back, and when I called mother, you answered."

She kissed him for reply, and laid the infant beside him.

"Did you say, mother, that father wanted to name the baby Ernest?"

"Yes, Dick, he did; but I can never have my baby named for a man, who, though innocent, will be hung for murder."

"Mother, I tell you now, solemnly, that Ernest Farrell will never come to that," answered Dick excitedly.

"Your poor father tried to believe so, too, Dick, but he could not see his way out of it; and he has got a brain fever from worrying over it."

"Did father think that?" Dick asked in a tone of apprehension. "Who did he think did the murder?"

"He tried, oh, so hard, to find out, but he failed to get any clew. I believe he thought he was on the track of somebody, when his strength gave way, and now he is delirious and talks of nothing else."

"He doesn't mention any names, does he, mother?" Dick asked furtively.

"Oh, no, he knows no one to name; his talk is all about the clew, and some new evidence he thought he had: something about a pair of trowsers he believed he had discovered; but they are not to be found on the premises, and I think he just imagined it."

The next moment Mrs. Martin was summoned by Martha Blunt to see the doctor, who wished to leave directions with her for her husband's medicine. Martha Blunt, expecting to return immediately, neglected to lock the door of the room in which her son was, virtually a prisoner. The door was stealthily opened, and the head of the idiot peered round the lintel, but if he had any thought of escape, he abandoned it on hearing the voice of the parrot calling from below, "Artey, Artey," the bird having caught the new name at once. The idiot hastily closed the door, and the next moment was blowing handfuls of feathers about the room, calling them his little pigeons, delighted when any of the feathers fell on his face or shoulders. He had seen, with a shudder, the great, green parrot the evening he reached the sheriff's house, and had heard its dreadful cry with the most abject terror. His mother had but to threaten him with the "green pigeon," as he called it, to insure implicit obedience; he was afraid to stir from his room, even

in her company, lest the green devil should catch him.

Dick Martin, left to his own reflections, grew despondent again. His mother's kindly, cheery presence sustained his weak, remorseful spirit, and when she went, all hope and peace went with her.

"I never would have done it but for her," Dick whispered to himself; "the villain wronged her, and I wanted to right her; but two wrongs can never make a right," he said sadly. "Poor little brother," he continued, as he leaned over, and soothed the waking infant, "if you have to go through with what I have, it would be better that you had never been born. You'd miss your chance of heaven, perhaps, but then, too, you would have escaped hell."

When the doctor next visited the sick sheriff, Mrs. Martin took him aside and told him of Dick's presence in the house, and her fears of his serious illness. There needed no caution from her to insure the silence of the friendly and discreet physician."

"What do you think of Dick's case, doctor?" asked the mother, anxiously, after a careful examination of the new patient had been made, and the closed door cut off his answer from the ears of the sick boy.

"He is much more diseased than appears on the surface, Mrs. Martin; his bright color and lustrous eyes are not tokens of health. Good nursing will

do more for him than any medicine can do, and I know I can trust you for that."

"I will do my part, doctor," said Mary Martin with a deep sigh.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WILL.

THE footfalls of the sheriff, dying in the distance, had sounded to the despairing soul of Ernest Farrell like the echoes of departing hope. The only man that cherished a belief in his innocence had given up his cause as lost. He must prepare, then, for the shameful death that awaited him. Prepare! how could he prepare for such a fate? He could not bring himself to contemplate, for a single instant, the awful tragedy that awaited him and his mother It was monstrous! it was impossible! He, Ernest Farrell, the recipient of all the favors wealth could bestow; loving and beloved by a beautiful woman worthy of his love; surely he was a man to be envied, and yet, without a moment's warning, despite his good-fortune and good name, by a train of circumstances no man could foresee or forestall, he was cast from his high estate into a dungeon, awaiting his trial as the murderer of his brother! The human soul stands appalled in the awful presence of despair, and flies to the most trivial hope for relief; the young man caught at the discovery, by the sheriff, of the blood-

stained trowsers as a drowning man catches at a straw. The fact that they were his own, marked with his name and discovered in his own house, in a place where no one unfamiliar with the premises would have concealed them, seemed only to add another link to the chain of evidence already so strong and consistent. He must take the risk of being able to prove the fact that the trowsers found in the dove-cot, muddy with hard riding and stained with blood, were not those worn by himself on the night of the murder, for the case would stand just where it did if he failed, and could be made no more desperate by the venture. He must wait until morning, however, when the sheriff would bring him the new evidence, and together they would consult and decide what was best to be done. He tried to recall who the Brinkwater folk were he had met the evening of his return from the chase; but he remembered that the light was waning when he reached the village, and from the sheriff's account the color of the blood-stained trowsers corresponded with that of the pair he then wore, and which he hoped to be able to prove, by credible witnesses, were seen on his person the evening before the murder. It would be a hazardous attempt, but he meant to make it, and use the discovery as the basis for a new hearing of the case.

The next morning the tidings reached him, through the deputy-sheriff, of Samuel Martin's illness and delirium, and the doctor's opinion that

he would be unfit for duty for weeks and, perhaps, months. This news was a great blow to Ernest Farrell. The sheriff's faith in him was the only tie, save one, that linked him to human sympathy, and now that was gone! The new sheriff was simply an officer, with an exalted idea of the magnitude and dignity of his office; he was honest, respectful, humane; but he had no opinions, no sentiment; he was there to do his duty, which the law defined and limited.

There was no time for delay. Ernest Farrell dispatched a note to his attorney, who gladly came at the urgent summons of his client. Mr. Lawrence heard the statement of Ernest, and at first seemed much impressed by it; but though he said nothing to discourage the prisoner, the longer he considered the matter the less hopeful it looked. The testimony of conflicting witnesses would simply neutralize the new evidence. But he went, at once, to the sheriff's office to examine the garment and obtain some information, if possible, from Samuel Martin himself. He found the sheriff very ill and Mrs. Martin in great distress. The attorney questioned her about the package her husband had brought home the night of his return from Brinkwater, but Mrs. Martin had not seen it, and could give no information concerning it beyond the fact that her husband had talked in his delirium of the trowsers. She made a search, assisted by Mr. Lawrence, of the sheriff's official premises with no result. She told the attorney that her husband had not been

like himself for some time, the case had so preyed on his mind that it had thrown him into a brain-fever from which she had her fears if he ever recovered. There was nothing more to be said or done, and the attorney went back to Ernest Farrell with this discouraging message. An attempt was made to interrogate the sick sheriff through his physician on the subject of the missing trowsers.

"Did you find a pair of Ernest Farrell's trowsers in the dove-cot the night you visited his house?" asks the doctor, when a somewhat lucid moment made the question possible.

"Who said I found a pair of Ernest Farrell's trowsers?" cried the sheriff excitedly.

"You have been saying so yourself ever since your illness began, Martin," said the doctor calmly.

"Then I have been telling a lie, that's all, and it's the first one, too, if I remember right. Who did you say I told? Where is Mary? Where are my keys? Oh, I didn't leave the secretary open, did I, doctor?" The sheriff raised himself on his elbow and looked wildly around.

"Where have you put the trowsers, Martin?" the doctor asked, gently laying the sick man back on his pillow and stroking his forehead with a composing hand, but getting no reply.

"Where are they, Samuel?" asked Mrs. Martin in a soothing tone; "tell your wife; it is a case of life or death, husband."

"Then I will tell you, Mary," he whispered in her hovering ear, "I found them in the secretary—

no, I locked them in the dove-cot—no, no, I took them—where did I take them, Mary? What have you done with my keys?"

Mrs. Martin found and brought the keys to her anxious husband, who soon grew calm and fell asleep with them in his hand; in another moment they slipped from his weak hold and fell on the coverlet.

"I think we had better look in the secretary Mrs. Martin," said the doctor, as he picked up the sheriff's keys; "it does not seem just the place he would put the trowsers; but he may have done so, if his mind was, as you say, dazed and wandering."

"They would be safe there, and he knew they would be undisturbed," replied the sheriff's wife; "go and search, doctor, and I will watch by Samuel."

Doctor Grantly went, and returned empty-handed. "I can not find them there," he said, "I suspect the discovery of the trowsers was a fancy of the sheriff's perturbed brain; poor Ernest, it was a forlorn hope at best!"

"I am afraid," said the doctor, when in company of Mr. Lawrence, he went to Ernest Farrell's cell, "the discovery of the blood-stained trowsers is a fiction of the sick man's disordered brain; he is very ill with cerebral fever, and does not know what he is saying. His wife tells me he has not been himself for days; mental aberration often precedes acute mental disturbance. We have searched the house for them and have been unsuccessful in find-

ing a trace of them ; the sheriff, when questioned, denied any knowledge of them, and only alluded to the discovery, in his delirium. Mrs. Martin says she has never seen them, which is not likely, if the sheriff had really brought the trowsers home."

"Then my last hope is gone !" sighed Ernest. He remembered how distracted the sheriff had been on the night of his last visit to the prison, and he now believed that his friend's excited imagination had conjured the phantom of the blood-stained garment.

"I will use every endeavor during my attendance on Sheriff Martin to discover the truth of this matter, be assured, Mr. Farrell," the doctor said, as he withdrew, "and you shall know the result as soon as I do." It was a feeble hope, but hope, however slight, was precious in this desperate case.

To distract his thoughts, and occupy his weary hours, Ernest opened the bundle of papers and letters which the sheriff had received from Virgin Grey the night of their encounter in the Farrell mansion. They were, for the greater part, unimportant papers, old letters and receipts, and such documents as accumulate on a man's hands in the course of years. He over-looked and destroyed them, one by one, until, to his surprise, he came to an unopened letter addressed to himself, in his father's handwriting. Of course it must have been placed in his private drawer before his father's death, five months ago, and the velvet of the drawer-lining having adhered to the fresh wax, had

held it in its hiding-place. To his amazement, Ernest found inclosed the following document :

"MY LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT."

The will contained an inventory of all the property of which the testator was possessed. This property was to be divided, after a handsome allowance to his wife, including the estate of Brinkwater, equally between his sons Joseph and Ernest Farrell. It was signed by two trustworthy witnesses, one of whom had died since the will was executed, and the other witness was traveling abroad. His father's signature was firmly written, and the fact that he was of sound mind, and uninfluenced, was attested before a notary whose seal was added to the document.

There was a letter, inclosed, addressed to Ernest and his mother, which the repentant man had written, acknowledging his submission to, and fear of, his elder son, whose influence he had allowed to mislead and blind him. It was a cowardly act to make this clandestine atonement, he said, but it was all his weakness would allow. This was the irony of Fate—a rich inheritance to two people accused of murder, and doomed to be hung.

Mr. Lawrence was summoned again, and the will shown him.

"What a world's pity it was not discovered sooner !" was his exclamation, on reading the document.

"Do you presume to think, Mr. Lawrence," replied Ernest hotly, "that the finding of that will would have made any difference in the fate of my step-brother?"

"No, indeed, my dear boy! But it would have given another motive for the crime of his taking-off. If you had been in possession of the contents of this will, the meeting at your house, and the altercation there would not have occurred, nor the murder have been committed under your roof; do you not see?"

"Yes, I see it all," sighed Ernest, wearily, "and if you can find a way out of this labyrinth of horrors for my mother and myself, this hateful wealth shall all be yours, Lawrence."

"Do you suppose I need a bribe, Ernest Farrell? I have done my utmost to serve you, and I shall continue to work day and night to find out the truth, if the truth is to be discovered in this world."

"Forgive me, my friend, if I seem to have grown suspicious of all men," said Ernest, humbly; "but what is wealth to me now? And what would not a man give for salvation from a shameful death? If you could conceive how I have suffered! I do not know why I have not gone mad, or taken my life. The thought of my mother and Virgin, alone has preserved me."

"I know, I know!" replied the faithful attorney with deep emotion. "There must be a way out of this terrible error; there must be, and we will hope until the last moment."

Lawrence went immediately to the cell of Agnes Farrell, and told her of the finding of the new will.

"It can make no difference," she said hopelessly, "to me; I await in sad certainty, but with fortitude, the awful hour of execution."

"It is a foregone conclusion," said the attorney, as he went sorrowfully on his way; "the trial will be a mere form."

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRIAL.

PUBLIC opinion, having had time to reflect, settled into a belief in the guilt of the accused. The suspense of the mystery was a burden, too heavy to be borne long, and the denizens of Claire County found the most plausible and natural theory of the murder, in that offered by the circumstantial evidence.

The light of this terrible crime threw upon the character of Agnes Farrell a lurid glow in which all her past sins were revealed, and magnified.

In the language of Betsey Driggs, who led the clique of female gossips, "One never knows what silks and satins cover; to see her in church with her prayer-book to her nose, and never turnin' that stiff neck o' her'n, you'd think she was a saint; but I guess all Brinkwater knows *now* what she is." There were a few in whose hearts remained the memory of her good deeds; the rector who had been the almoner of her bounty; the doctor whose needy patients she had supplied with food and clothing; the helpless, rheumatic Polly Lampson, who had

shared her daily drives ; these had charity for her, and prayed that though guilty she might be, the law would be merciful.

When turned on Ernest Farrell, this searching light, to those who had come under the spell of his attractions, showed not the shadow of a flaw. There were those who thought that, reared under the influence of his mother's passionate hatred for the dead man, and perhaps suspecting, or fearing, the deed might be done that night, yet not being an active partner in the crime (of that much they were certain), he would, somehow, escape conviction.

"He'll never turn state's, and convict Agnes Farrell," said the leader of the clique ; "he thinks enough of her to die with her, and fer her, if he is goin' to be married to Virgin Grey, I can tell her that. I suppose she'd believe 'em both innocent agin' the light of the Jedgment Day."

The Grand Jury had heard the coroner's report, and the testimony of all the witnesses, and had brought in an indictment for murder. The trial was set for the coming term of the District Court, which was now at hand, and Benedict Strong, prosecutor for the state, announced himself ready for trial. The prosecutor had left nothing undone to secure the conviction of the prisoners awaiting trial for murder in Marshmeadows Jail. He had marshaled and examined all the evidence in the case ; rejecting what was weak or irrelevant, and putting in a strong light what was useful, and effec-

tive. He visited the scene of the murder, and without seeming to talk about the case, adroitly gathered every item of gossip, and stored in his tenacious memory every thing he heard in regard to the conduct and character of the accused. Armed with the authority of the court, he went to the family mansion, and in the interest of the prosecution, secured all the documents he thought would be useful to his view of the case. He spent, through his agents, no small amount of money in prompting the memories of those who were found to be disaffected toward the defendants; and finally he endeavored to visit the jail, and converse with the prisoners: but the vigilance of Sheriff Martin frustrated this infamy. He collected every ghastly token of the murder, and if he could have produced the body of the murdered man, and brought it into court, he would not have hesitated to do so. He searched the criminal records for precedents, and studied Daniel Webster and all other authorities on circumstantial evidence; he spent his days and nights in inditing and committing to memory, not only an argument that would convince, but an oration that would bear before the flood of its eloquence, the jury, to a speedy conviction, and a verdict embodying the utmost rigor of the law. A great State was his client; he could look at but one side of the case. The burden of proof rested with him, and if conviction could be compassed, he must do his utmost to convict. It was not with Benedict Strong a question of what the truth was, so

much as a question of what the truth from his standpoint appeared to be. He felt a professional pride in conducting the case to a successful issue; the prosecution must not only be a success, but it must be a triumph which should redound to his forensic skill. It was his boast that no case, under his prosecution, however strong its defense, had ever escaped conviction. It behooved the plaintiffs then to make good their defense.

The counsel on the other side was the very best the county afforded. It was safe, and eminently respectable, but it was handicapped by a conscience, by the strength of the evidence, the bitterness of the prosecution, and the utter hopelessness of the case.

The theory of emotional insanity was decided upon as the only one by which the case could be defended.

The defense hoped to be able to prove that the son had no knowledge of, or hand in the murder, and that the mother, driven to desperation by passion and despair, under the recent provocation, had in a moment of mental aberration, committed the awful deed. Suspecting the line the defense would be likely to take, the prosecution endeavored to forestall the plea of insanity. No member of Mrs. Farrell's family had ever shown the slightest taint of insanity; on the contrary, they were shown to be a strong-minded, well-balanced race; shrewd in business transactions; lovers, makers, and keepers of money. They were passionate and

quarrelsome under provocation, and the hot blood that fermented in their veins had been transmitted to the woman who had committed the murder. It was shown that some generations previous, an ancestor of the accused woman, in a dispute about property, had killed a man, and that love of power and wealth, and the homicidal tendency were well known to be hereditary.

The whole country-side was alive to the interest of this important case. Every available shelter was secured by men and women who came from far and near to attend the trial. The court-room was packed, the people swarming up to the jury-box and to the very footstool of justice. The journals of distant cities sent their representatives to give a full report of each day's proceedings, and it is from the columns of these veracious papers that the truthful account of this trial is taken.

The accused seemed to have few friends. Religion, fashion, respectability, are summer birds that the breath of dishonor scatters, like autumn leaves before the winds of heaven. One pale girl, with a flower-like face and violet, tear-stained eyes, entered alone and took her seat beside the accused. Agnes Farrell, her deathly pallor augmented by her dress of deep mourning, sat with closed eyes as though the light were too painful a thing to look upon. She was greatly changed ; the beauty that once had so distinguished her, was gone ; her brilliant eyes were dim and cavernous ; her face was deeply worn by lines of suffering and pathos ; her

once jet-black hair was streaked with white ; her whole aspect was one of a resolute spirit that would not falter till the end, though the struggle had cost almost life and reason. After the visit of her son to her in prison, calmness, if not peace, returned to her. For his sake she braced herself to meet the trial, and she performed it as a duty that must be met with dignity.

Ernest sat at her right hand white as sculptured marble, but resolute and apparently composed ; a slight nervous twitching of the lips alone betraying his agitation. He held his mother's right hand clasped in his, and at short intervals spoke in a low voice words that were intended for her ear alone. He turned a grateful look on Virgin when she entered, flushing to the temples at the thought of indignity to her. At the sight of this pathetic picture the tide of sympathy turned at once in favor of the accused.

A young, handsome, interesting man of family and wealth, of hitherto unblemished name, the affianced husband of a beautiful girl, who of all the world alone was faithful to him, a suffering mother, perhaps a criminal, who was prompted to the deed by a great provocation, held up to execration as the perpetrators of a foul crime whose punishment was an ignominious death, was a picture to make the angels weep. And pitying women did weep, each putting herself in the place of the two before the bar, ere a word of testimony had been given. If human sympathy could have acquitted Agnes

Farrell and her son, they would have gone free.

Thanks to the efforts of Benedict Strong, there was to be no delay in securing a jury. It was impanneled with the usual formality of a challenge or two, but the challenged men were soon replaced, and the jury-box was speedily filled by the twelve men who were to decide on the fate of Ernest and Agnes Farrell.

The court opened amid breathless silence.

"Guilty or not guilty?" demanded the solemn voice of the judge.

Agnes Farrell, assisted by her son, rose to her feet; her lips essayed to speak, but they uttered no sound.

"*Not guilty, your honor.*"

It was Ernest Farrell's voice that broke the death-like stillness.

Every head was thrust forward to catch a glimpse of the prisoners in this trying moment, and when the question was answered in the negative, a long sigh of intense relief arose from the spectators.

The prosecutor had secured a record of the testimony offered before the Grand Jury, which was remarkably clear and straightforward. It was the pleasure and duty of Benedict Strong that this evidence should not be weakened or contradicted, and by skillful cross-examination he produced more and better testimony for his side of the case than the witnesses themselves were aware of.

James Denby was the most recalcitrant, and the hardest to manage. He insisted that it was Joseph Farrell's face he had seen at the window, for of this he had persuaded himself, though he was obliged to reluctantly admit that the face seen was muffled by the hands, which "point" Benedict Strong made the most of.

Hannah Wraith's testimony was reckless, and under cross-examination contradictory. She broke down utterly at last, and amid tears and protestations, declared that the man she saw leave the house and return by the back-door was Ernest Farrell.

This evidence made a great sensation, but the cross-examination by the defense proved that it was too dark to distinguish color, or feature, or even the apparel worn by the person seen descending the cellar with a bundle, so that this apparently important evidence was ruled out and the woman released, indignant at the idea that her sworn testimony was not to be received.

The housekeeper's testimony was much more guarded than when she appeared before the coroner. But she, too, became confused, under cross-examination, and when asked by the prosecution if she believed her mistress was a sane woman on the evening of the twentieth of June, answered, "As sane as I am."

If Agnes Farrell was a guilty woman, she had the air of being a very frank and candid one as she gave her testimony, which made a favorable impres-

sion on the jury. She only faltered when asked if she had seen her son after they had separated for the night; the instant hesitation only accented with greater emphasis her firmly enunciated "*No.*"

Ernest's examination was by far the most trying that any of the witnesses were subjected to. The evident desire of the defense to shield him, and if possible clear him of the crime of his brother's murder, served but to instigate Benedict Strong to the use of all his legal ingenuity to trap and criminate him from his own mouth. He was forced under the most torturing cross-examination to rehearse the so-called quarrel in the library the evening before the murder, and in his endeavor to be just to the murdered man, Ernest Farrell failed to convey to the jury half the provocation and injury he and his mother had received at the hands of Joseph Farrell.

The ignorant spectators, most of whom had never attended a trial for murder before, watched the proceedings with the most intense interest. The general hope was that the evidence would not be sustained; there was a prejudice against convicting on circumstantial evidence alone; but when the testimony was all in, the cross-examination ended, and such rebuttal offered as was possible, it did not need the labored arguments of the defense, nor the fiery eloquence of the prosecution, to convince the most hopeful that conviction was a forgone conclusion. It seemed needless cruelty then for Benedict

Strong to add to his overpowering arguments and summary the following peroration :

" Gentlemen of the Jury, the evidence is before you. Although circumstantial, the chain is complete: not a link is wanting. Able counsel for the defense, begging the question of guilt, have endeavored to set up a defense of the accused on the ground of emotional insanity, with what little success you have seen. Your sympathies have been appealed to in the name of youth, beauty, and love, pictured before you ; but, gentlemen, this is not a sensational drama ; we are not before the footlights to view a pre-arranged tragedy where men and women simulate vice and virtue.

" *No*, this is a real tragedy in real life to be tried before a court of justice which, like the Creator of the Universe, is no respecter of persons.

" Murder is as old as the world, the first man born into the world murdered the second one, *and they were brothers !*

"Almighty Justice, stooping from His high estate, marked the fratricidal wretch and sent him a flying fugitive through all the ages, and his guilty footsteps echoing down the corridors of time still smite upon our ears.

" Gentlemen of the Jury (with a long fore-finger of scorn pointed at Ernest, who faced the terrible speaker with unblenched gaze), behold the modern Cain, who, unlike the Cain of old, did not approach his brother awake and in broad daylight to strike

the death-dealing blow, but in the silence and darkness of midnight, the stealthy assassin armed with the murderous knife, and the sleep-yielding draught, stole to the couch where his victim lay sleeping, and adding a double element of weakness to his already unprotected and unsuspecting state, severed, with one fell blow, his head from his body.

"The red hand of murder placed its seal upon the hand of the murdered man to say the deed was done. The good, kind, elder brother who came with offers of peace and reconciliation, for reward met his death; for a benefit offered, his blood was foully shed by the man in whose veins the same red current flowed. And from what motive was this murder committed? from the basest of motives—the love of money! It was not the deed of a necessitous and desperate outcast, famishing for a crust to satisfy his starving soul, but the deliberate act of a well-fed, well-housed man; a man who never had a whim ungratified in his life, and who, outraging hospitality, brotherly love, humanity and justice, throwing off all restraint, lowering himself below the level of the beasts of the field, slaughtered his own brother, under his own roof, helpless in sleep—for a paltry sum of money! Gentlemen of the Jury, what punishment is adequate for so base a crime? I leave it to your intelligent sense of justice to declare.

"And if so base a thing in this pampered youth, how infinitely baser the crime in a *woman*. She, in

whose breast flowed the milk that nourished this viper, *she* was a fit accomplice of the deed! Mother and son! how tender the relation, how divine the love! but prostituted by this lust of greed, the mother's milk turned back and, poisoned at its source, armed his strong hand to do the murderous deed. Mother and son linked in love and linked in infamy, not divided in their lives, let them in their death be not divided. Gentlemen of the Jury, I rest my case."

When Benedict Strong sat down, pale with the excitement his own eloquence had produced, there was a deathly stillness in the court-room. The spectators seemed spellbound. Agnes Farrell, with her hopeless gaze lifted, looked afar, and seemed unconscious of her surroundings. The last terrible words of the prosecutor wrought a fearful change in Ernest Farrell: his face blanched to an ashen hue, and bore the lines of intolerable anguish. He still clasped his mother's hand, but he dare not turn his despairing eyes on her face. Virgin Grey sat white and rigid, with hard, tearless eyes, as though she were turned to stone. It would have almost seemed merciful if a bolt from heaven had stricken dead these three tortured and suffering beings. The closing speech of the defense sounded tame and superfluous. No one followed it. The whole vast audience was under the spell of Benedict Strong's terrible arraignment. The judge's charge was direct and explicit. The consideration of a reasonable doubt was urged upon the jury,

and the great murder-case was given over to their decision. A shuffling of retiring feet broke the dread silence, and the jury filed out : there was an absence which seemed intolerably long to the inmates of the prisoners' box.

" They've hung," whispered a man to his neighbor. But leaving the jury-box was only a formality. The jury slowly entered : the foreman holding aloft a written verdict. The court rose : " Gentlemen of the Jury, look upon the prisoners. Prisoners, look upon the jury." Their eyes met, there was a moment's pause—" Gentlemen, what is your verdict ? " asked the court. The foreman answered amid a silence that could be felt :

"*We find the prisoners at the bar guilty of murder in the first degree.*" It was signed by the twelve men. " Have you any thing to say ? " asked the judge of the accused, in a faltering voice. " There can nothing more be said," answered Ernest Farrell.

" Then I sentence you, Agnes Farrell, and you, Ernest Farrell, to be each, and separately, hung by the neck until you are dead : and may God have mercy upon your souls."

Each spectator in the crowded audience looked at the judge as he uttered the awful sentence, as though his own life hung in the balance. A wailing cry, like the last agony of a broken heart, came from the prisoners' box. Agnes Farrell had fallen on the floor in a dead swoon.

The painful tension of the last hour was broken,

and there was a movement and murmuring among the crowd as of a tumult. The emotions excited by the trial had been so exalted that men felt something more, or less, than a simple recommitment of the prisoners was due themselves. The suspense that must precede the execution of the sentence seemed intolerable.

"If that sentence ain't soon carried out, there'll be but one execution; the old lady looks as if she weren't long for this world," said one brutal speaker, as the crowd slowly pressed from the building.

"I never see a woman hung yet," said another.

"And I've got to see my fust man."

"Heaven pity them, for man will not," said a gentle-faced old woman, to whom the sorrows of life had brought Christian charity.

"Human sympathy is very precious," said Doctor Grantly, as he watched the crowd pour from the court-house, just opposite his office door, and press around the carriage that bore Agnes Farrell and her son back to prison, "but human curiosity—and where one begins, and the other ends, it is sometimes difficult to define—is a fearful thing."

"So they're to be *both* hung," cried Betsey Driggs, when the news of the sentence reached Brinkwater; "I guess Jim Denby 'll dig both them graves after all."

"I won't believe it till it comes to the worst," said the grave-digger sorrowfully, as with bowed

head he took his homeward way through the churchyard. "In the course of natur' I'd be willin' to do it, but I'll do it under protest, if I have to do it in this case, sure."

CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER THE TRIAL.

WHEN Agnes Farrell reached her cell, after the awful ordeal of the trial, she was in a state of utter prostration. The deputy-sheriff, who, being a bachelor, had little knowledge of womankind, and their wonderful powers of endurance, was greatly alarmed at her feeble condition, and summoned Doctor Grantly, at that moment in attendance on the sick sheriff, to see her.

"I fear she will die on my hands, doctor," said the deputy-sheriff.

"It's a pity that she could not," returned the doctor.

He found the wretched woman suffering from nervous prostration; her state being the re-action from the long agony of the trial. The doctor gave her a composing draught and advised the sheriff not to allow Mrs. Farrell to be left alone that night.

"Do you fear she will lay violent hands on herself, doctor?"

"Pray look at the matter from a less professional

point of view, sheriff, if you can ; she is a woman, and needs a woman's help and sympathy, that's all."

"I know, doctor, but it's my duty to prevent—"

"Yes, yes," said the doctor impatiently, "there can nothing of the kind happen with her, rest assured of that."

Martha Blunt was sent for to watch beside the prisoner, being known to the deputy-sheriff only as a capable woman of great nerve and many resources.

She kept her solemn vigil, looking by the dim light of the solitary candle like a grim, expectant Fate. Her thoughts were full of pity and tenderness, however. "I would save her if I could, yes," thinking of some means of self-destruction, "I would help her to *that*, even. I would open the prison doors, and let her go ; but it's no use to think of such a thing : she is too proud to escape punishment by a crime or by an act of cowardice. If she were cast upon the world where could she go? Who dare receive her? The law would only drag her back again. If she could but die here, and now!" The housekeeper's thoughts wandered off to a subject that she dare not translate into words. "If I thought she could—if I thought he would have been her tool—something he has said convinces me he knows something ; but he could not have done it alone, he is but a child ; he hated this man, though ; the key was taken by some one familiar—I have been afraid to question him for fear that she—if it could be, then there is *no* human being who would

not, under such temptation and provocation, have committed the crime. I could scourge myself if I cherished the belief, and yet—and yet he alone knew the way—he always put on that gaudy gown whenever he saw it—he knew where the cellar key hung ; he was not afraid in the night—if he did—then she—oh, how can I suspect, even under my breath, my loving mistress and my poor, idiot boy ? I will not think of it lest I go mad ! "

The prisoner sighed and turned in her cot. All evil thoughts fled from the mind of the faithful housekeeper like birds of ill omen, at the sound of that beloved voice. Martha was at the side of her mistress in an instant.

" I am here, dear friend and mistress ; your old housekeeper, Martha ; can I do any thing for you ? "

Agnes Farrell fixed her eyes on the sympathetic face bent above her. She put up her hand and took hold of the brooch at Martha's throat.

" I gave you that, did I not ? It was a Christmas ;" then, after a pause, " that is a beautiful custom of remembering the blessed coming of the Christ-child into the world by giving our friends a joyful token."

" Yes," said Martha, in a choking voice, remembering her unworthy thoughts, " it is beautiful, and you never forgot me, dear Mrs. Farrell."

" And you, too, Martha, remembered me."

" May God forget me, if I am ever unmindful of all your goodness to me—and mine," sobbed Martha.

"When the Holy Infant was born in that lowly place at midnight, and the stars sang together, and the wise men came with their precious offerings, His sweet, young mother did not dream of the awful fate that awaited Him; did she, Martha?"

"Oh no, oh no," wailed Martha, weeping, thinking only of another mother and son.

"And if she had, if she could have foreseen it, do you not think, do you not believe, Martha, that she would have been willing and glad to save Him from all the pain and shame of such an ignominious death?"

"Yes, I believe she would. I know she would."

"And if a poor, weak, erring, and sinful mother, such as I am, would seek to save her fair young son, so good, so innocent, and so beloved, do you think that it would be a sin, Martha?"

"No, it would be a duty."

"Yes, a holy duty," cried Agnes Farrell, her pale face lighted with a gleam of joy; "and if she could remove the stain from him, if she *could;* and if in doing so she should augment her own sin, still it would be her duty, Martha?"

"It would be her duty to do her utmost," said Martha, not following Agnes Farrell's thought.

"And, if the sin of the mother should be so great that God Himself would not forgive it, do not you think the heavenly mother," here she raised herself in the narrow bed, and throwing her arms around the neck of her faithful servant drew her ear toward her lips and whispered, "you know she was *a mother*,

Martha, and would she not plead for this poor earthly mother when she appeared before the bar of God, that she might be forgiven at last, and that she might be found worthy to be restored—to—her son—in—Heaven?"

Martha could answer only through her tears. There was a long silence. Agnes Farrell was communing with her own thoughts, and silently praying for strength.

"Now I am really hungry, my dear, faithful Martha," she said at last, "can you not get me a crust of bread?"

Too glad to serve her mistress, Martha hastened to make a cup of tea, and some delicate toast, with which she soon returned, and was surprised and delighted to find that Mrs. Farrell relished it with an appetite. She saw Martha regard her with pleased interest.

"You are glad that I am able to eat, are you not? My mind, so long tossed and distracted, is now at rest, and nature asserts herself. Thank you, dear Martha, for all you have done for me. I may seem cold to those who do not know me, but you have found the warm place in my heart. Let me tell you now, my child, that in that drawer," pointing to the deal table that served her as a desk, "you will find my last wishes written, and I look to you to see that what is expressed there is carried out."

"I will, I will!" cried Martha Blunt.

"And," continued Agnes, in a low voice—"ask the sheriff if it is a painful death—my son must

not see—and, will you cling to me, Martha, you are my only woman-friend, till the end, and see that no indignity is offered to this poor body—when I am dead?"

Martha could not answer. She threw herself passionately across the feet of her mistress, in a transport of hysterical grief.

"See, I am calm, Martha, this ordeal must be faced, and I have looked at it so long that it has lost, in some degree, its terror. I know my good name must suffer, for a while, but in the end, all will be well."

"Now, rise, Martha," said Agnes Farrell, in an authoritative tone, "and go to bed. I shall need nothing more to-night."

"It does not hurt me to lose sleep, you know, Mrs. Farrell, I am used to it, and would rather stay."

"But I can be more comfortable, if I know you are comfortable. Martha, do as I wish."

The housekeeper was too accustomed to obey that commanding voice, to hesitate, and bidding her mistress good-night she left her alone.

"She talks about saving him," Martha said to herself, as she mounted the prison stairs, "perhaps she can. She is a woman to do what she undertakes. I never knew her to fail." Later, when she went to look upon the slumbers of her idiot son, she murmured, "There's nothing I would not do for my poor injured boy; mother's love is mother's love, the world over."

CHAPTER XVII.

ERNEST'S DREAM.

WHEN released from the strong restraint he had imposed upon himself in the presence of his mother, Ernest Farrell gave way to woeful despair. The agony of hope was over, the sentence was passed; he was doomed to a felon's death. He sat down on his cot, and buried his face in his hands. To die, so full of life, and hope, and love! To give up all the chances of the future; all the world might bring to him, all that he might bring the world, to lay it down unknown, untried for what? A noble cause; his country's honor; a human life? No, alas, no! to meet a shameful death, to leave a tarnished name, to leave the woman of his love to be pointed at as a felon's bride. It could not, should not be; it was too monstrous to be thought of for a moment! He rose and walked about his cell as though he would find in motion an escape from his dreadful thoughts; but there was no escape! As he paced back and forth despair kept step with him: he saw the awful end, and then all thought of self was banished in a moment at the recollection of his mother. She, the beautiful

high-born, heroic Agnes Farrell, *his mother* to stand beside him in such a shameful death! He thought of the long array of martyred women, who had gone to their death as innocent of crime as she; but their names had grown brighter with the flight of years, and no blemish remained to dim their glory. But she, his loved, and loving mother——

At that moment, the deputy-sheriff looked in to see if the prisoners were comfortable for the night. Ernest eagerly asked for news of his mother.

"She is sleeping," replied the officer, "the doctor has given her a composing draught, and Mrs. Blunt is with her for the night," the man turned away.

A composing draught! Ernest thoughts flew, at once, to the phial Sheriff Martin had put into his hand, and which he had placed out of sight in his table-drawer. He opened the drawer, and took it out. Here was hope in this black drug, as the sheriff had called it. "It shall never come to *that* for her," he said, thinking of all the hideous paraphernalia of the scaffold.

"No, if self-murder is confession, if it is cowardice—it is a decent and dignified death, at least, and that is all there is left for either of us, in this world.

"Oh, Virgin! my love," he cried, as a flood of passionate recollection swept over his soul, "how will your poor broken heart bear all this agony and shame!"

He sat down before his table: there, he saw

had been placed in his absence, paper, pen and ink. What message had a man in his position to leave the world? He only saw three words that burned before him like vivid lightning. "*I am innocent, I am innocent, I am innocent!*" Who would believe the words of a man condemned for murder, even though angels, trumpet-tongued, should blow it from the heavens! Self-control at last resumed its sway from sheer exhaustion, and when the jailer came in the early morning with the prisoner's breakfast, he saw Ernest Farrell, with his head dropped on his outstretched arms upon the table. A shaft of sunlight streaming through the grating burnished the beauty of his golden hair. The scene was so touching, the expression of the prisoner's pale face so peaceful, the man started back in affright. "I wonder if he is dead?" was his first thought. He was not dead, but dreaming.

He dreamed he was a homeless, friendless wanderer through all the world, pursued by an unmerciful fate that drove him on and on; there was no rest, no peace, no escape; ever and ever, day and night, he must flee before this pursuing presence; alone, through cold and storm and darkness, till utterly exhausted, he reached a stream that must be crossed. His fate was pressing close behind him, and he dare not pause. He saw a boatman near the shore who said, "I will carry you over and give you peace and rest, if you will give me your life and good name."

"Peace and rest! Ah, that is what I have long been seeking!" cried the young man.

"Then come with me," replied the boatman.

There could be no delay; the dreadful enemy was close at hand. Ernest stepped into the boat, the boatman pushed into the stream and glided down. A baffled laugh followed them from the shore. They glided on, with hardly a sense of motion, down and ever down the stream; oblivion, mingled with a dim, blissful prevision of the future, steeped his senses as they entered upon a sea on which the sun shone warm and where sweet-scented airs kissed his closed eyelids. All was rest and peace, all his sorrows were forgotten; a rapt joy held him entranced and expectant.

"This is the blessed country," said the boatman, and they landed on a green and flower-decked shore, where the very air breathed gladness. Ernest turned to speak, but boat and boatman had vanished. He looked around him and felt what, at rare intervals, human emotion sometimes yields, a transport of joy, at the mere fact of existence. He saw spread before him a country such as no mortal vision ever saw. On one side, where a fair sapphire sea laved its base, rose a smooth, green, terraced mountain to the clouds. Upon its side wandered and fed many sheep with their young, and a shepherd with a tender lamb in his bosom, led the way up to the shining heights. "I will follow the Good Shepherd," said Ernest. He found the way easy and delightful; the Shepherd's voice was

saying, "I am the way—follow me." And as Ernest lightly ascended, feeling the vigor of youthful life in every limb, he heard another voice, and looking around he saw his mother just beside him. She said, "My beloved son, I thought the way was impossible, but all things are possible with God."

The jailer's entrance woke him, and Ernest, lifting his head with the radiance of that blessed vision lighting his pale face, asked, "Is it morning?"

The man set down the tray he bore, in amazement. "I wonder why he looks like that? No guilty man could look so like an angel!"

"Can I do any thing for you, Mr. Farrell?" he asked.

"Tell my mother all is well with me; that is all, thank you." The man lingered; he, too, was young and full of lusty life; his heart was wrung with pity for the youth so soon to die. "I want to say, Mr. Farrell, that I ain't here from choice; a man must earn a living somehow, these hard times." In his awkwardness he could not express the thought he had in his mind.

"A man can make an honest action fine by the way in which he does it," said Ernest, essaying to help the poor fellow to his meaning.

"I know that, somehow, but what I wanted to say was—" here his voice broke down—"that I don't believe that you could have done that murder, any more than I could have done it."

Ernest rose and took the poor boy's hand with a

feeling of pity for him. "Heaven has made us all compassionate, else human life would be intolerable," he said.

His eye fell on the phial that had dropped from his relaxing hand. A feeling of exultation swelled his breast; he seized it as if it had been a viper, and throwing it through the grating, heard it shatter into fragments on the flags below. He had conquered the bitterness of fate!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MEETING IN THE CELL.

NO day passed that did not bring Virgin Grey and Martha Blunt together. It was through the housekeeper's faithful hands that all communications to her imprisoned friends passed. The sheriff's illness and the deputy-sheriff's inexperience rendered the offices of the housekeeper absolutely necessary. She came and went between the prisoners and the outside world as one having authority.

"The deputy is gone for the day, and I have charge of the prison!" she said to Virgin, who had come, as was her daily wont, to bring messages and receive tidings of her friends.

Martha looked at the young girl significantly. "Will you go?" she asked. The girl was on her feet in an instant. "Is he ready for me; does he wish it?" were her eager questions.

For Ernest Farrell, despite all his doubts and fears, had hoped the trial would offer some means of escape. There were none, and he had begged the privilege at last of seeing Virgin in his cell. The shock to her which he so much dreaded, the shame to himself of being seen in such a shameful

place by the woman he loved, must be met. It was their only place of meeting now; some last words he must say, some last wishes express to her.

Martha Blunt conducted Virgin to the cell, and at last she was alone with her lover. Ernest felt the deepest emotion as Virgin entered, bringing to that dark and cheerless place an air redolent of youthful freshness. A vision of all he had lost in life came in at the open door with her sweet presence. Spring's green gladness and bird-songs, and flowers, the bright and rapturous aspect of nature, rushed upon and over-whelmed him.

"Oh, my love, my love," he cried, "God has forsaken us, but you remain faithful!"

She was in his arms, and for one brief moment the wretched past was blotted out.

"This is a dark and dreary place," said the young girl, looking around her, and shuddering at the prison gloom to which her eyes were unaccustomed. "I had believed it more cheerful." His heart thrilled at the tender inflections of her voice, so long denied him.

"It is indeed a dark place for your bright presence, dearest," he answered, clasping her fair head in both his hands, and looking down fondly into her tender, upturned face, filled with a wistful sorrow.

"Where you are, my promised husband, is the place for me," she answered gently.

"Promised husband!" he cried passionately. "Oh, promise never to be fulfilled in this life!"

"Yes, dearest!" she said, "it is of that I came to speak. I will become your wedded wife, and bear through all my life your honored name!"

"Can you mean this, dear heart? Will you stand up before the world and take for life the name of a condemned murderer?"

"Hush, dear love, such words applied to you have no meaning for me. You are my noble, guiltless Ernest!"

"But the law condemns and *proves* me guilty."

"The law is not infallible; it has made such terrible mistakes before."

"Then your trust and love remain unclouded!"

"They shine the brighter for this ordeal."

"Thank God, that in one faithful heart love and pity live for me! What will you do my, poor, stricken love—when I am gone?"

"What will I do?" she cried, losing the self-control she had struggled so long to maintain. "What will I do? I will spend every moment of my life and every dollar I can command to prove you innocent, and having proved it," she raised her lovely eyes to heaven—"I will live to prove it—I will be buried by your side."

"Ah, this is compensation indeed; I can die in peace, leaving my good name with you!"

"Do not speak of dying, dearest; a thousand things may interpose before it is too late."

"It is already too late; all the formalities of the law have been complied with; only the dread hour awaits!"

"I will believe until the last hour that there is hope."

"Dear love, prepare your mind for the separation that must come." She was clinging to his neck now and sobbing convulsively.

"Oh, my love," she cried, "if I could go with you, how willingly, how joyfully would I go!"

"No, it is right, my Virgin, that you remain awhile; life at best is short. You can do for me what I can not do for myself—vindicate the memory of my mother; the thought of her fate is for me the sting of death!"

"Oh, Ernest, I have not forgotten her; poor, poor mother! But she will not be left to mourn; there is happiness in that."

"And will there not be happiness in living and doing my last behest, dear love?"

"Not happiness, dear Ernest; happiness can never visit your poor Virgin again; only duty, duty!"

"Then let duty be your aid and comforter in the dark hours that are to come; remember I ask this of you, Virgin!"

"You shall not be disappointed. I will not fail you, Ernest."

Her lover placed a sealed letter in the young girl's hand. "I have written you many letters, dearest, but none so sad as this one."

She kissed the missive, fondly looking into his face with woeful, compassionate eyes.

"One wish, I will repeat to you with my lips;

when the last hour comes, see that my mother——" he could say no more, for the first time since the tragedy he burst into passionate weeping.

The violence of his grief calmed Virgin at once. "I will, I will," she cried, "dear innocent, martyred woman; is she not my mother also?" His head was on her bosom, and she soothed him with that divine maternal love that is born in the heart of every woman, to be poured like balm on the bruised and bleeding hearts of the suffering children of men.

"My darling, my darling, it breaks my heart to see you like this. Do not die of grief! I can not bear to leave you thus!"

"Forgive me, my Virgin! this dreadful thought has unmanned me. I am very weak to distress you so. Your visit has indeed comforted me, and eased my burdened heart. Remember, love, that you have never made me any thing but inexpressibly happy; my last earthly thought shall be of you, my earliest awakening one of Virgin; for believe me, dear love, that to one who has so long faced death, the things of this life seem vain and transitory compared to that which we shall receive hereafter."

"I will come daily to the last—your words being a strange comfort and peace, Ernest, and I need them. I am a poor, weak girl when left to myself."

"You shall not be alone, sweetheart—I will be ever near you."

With a long lingering embrace they parted: it was their first and last meeting in his cell, and

Virgin went out from the presence of her lover, as Eve went forth from the heavenly garden, leaving the blazing sword of a broken law flaming behind her.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GALLOWS.

THE current of time flowed on, and brought the dreadful day, for the execution of the sentence of Agnes and Ernest Farrell, nearer and nearer.

Men, and horrible to believe, women, ordered their affairs to the end that this day should be a day of leisure, not a holiday, nor a day of pleasure-seeking, but a day given up to the contemplation of an awful spectacle, such as comes to one but once in a life time. "The hanging" was to be open to the public, for it was thought necessary "to make an example" of the authors of the most dastardly crime that had ever been committed in the annals of Claire County. Fathers determined to bring their sons, that they might profit by the warning this young man's terrible end afforded: mothers arranged to bring their daughters to see a woman die, who had broken the laws of God and man. There was no little curiosity mingled with this puritanical pretense of self-improvement. Men and women were not hung every day, there might never be another opportunity to gratify this morbid

taste for the horrible, and it was well to make the most of this opportunity. The gallows was erected by a man expert in the building of these supposed necessities of our Christian civilization, and loomed almost under the shadow of the church tower : a hideous object in the midst of a beautiful landscape.

Little children mounted with their innocent feet the steps that led to the fatal drop.

"*I'll* never kill a person," said one precious prattler, as she toilfully climbed the steep stairway, "I wouldn't be hunged for any thing."

"I'd run away," said a boy in his first jacket, who thought it was a manly thing to do under the circumstances ; "I'd run away, and I'd never come back, *neither*."

"But God would find you anyhow," said Sissy Young, "and I wouldn't ever do such a thing, 'fi was you, Tommy."

"I ain't a-goin' to do such a thing," said the manful Tommy, not quite sure in his own mind, whether it was the murder, or the flight, that he forswore.

"I don't want to even see 'em hung ; mother says it's too dreadful ; we can see the gallows from the porch where the honeysuckle grows. There's *two* eggs in the robin's nest now, Tommy !" said Sissy, with that easy transition of ideas common to the young.

"When there are *three*, I'll——" the boy made a suggestive pause.

"You'll *what?*" exclaimed Sissy, in an agony of apprehension. Tommy went through a pantomime on the gallows' post, of climbing up, and robbing a bird's nest.

"You won't neither, Tommy Scott, if you rob b-b-b-b-birds nests when you're l-l-l-ittle, you'll ——" Sissy was sobbing with both chubby fists in her eyes.

"You'll, you'll what now?" asked the boy, aggressively.

"You'll b-be a b-bad, wicked m-m-man," sobbed the girl. The pleasing prospect of coming to manhood, even with a smirched character, placated the threatening Tommy, and he said in a soothing tone, "It's just like a *girl* to cry, I didn't *say* I was a-goin' to rob your old bird's nest."

"Oh, Tommy," said Sissy, beaming now like the sun through her rain of tears, "they are *so* cunning, the little blue eggs; and the mother robin is so proud."

"What are you doing there, you little rascals," shouted the deputy-sheriff, as he saw the children standing on the scaffold.

"We—just—wanted—to see," said Sissy, toddling down in fear and trepidation at the sound of the authoritative voice; timing her timid words to her hurried steps.

"Oh, yes, like all your sex, you're 'just wantin' to see,'" said the officer, piercing the little maiden's soul, with stern, official eyes. "Get away, both of ye. I suppose if any apples grew on that frightful

tree you'd be just wantin' to taste 'em, too! It makes me think of the time I went to Virginy, a year after the war," soliloquized the deputy, "a mile or so out of Charlestown, when I saw an old howitzer twined round with wild mornin' glories, and its throat stuffed with a bird's nest:—the whole brood flew out as I passed, screaming and whizzing, and I dodged as if they had been hot shot—as I had dodged many a time before. That old howitzer sung another tune during the war, and many a poor fellow died of its music."

The children scudded away before the harmless officer's gruff words: Tommy looking back and uttering with a fearful joy, "I wish it was *him* 'stead of Mr. Farrell!" while Sissy contented herself with the more feminine utterance, as she continued her flight, of, "Mean old *thing!*"

* * * * * *

Agnes Farrell, in these last days, wrote continually. She gave the deputy-sheriff, one morning, a heavily-sealed letter. "To be handed to Miss Grey," she said.

The deputy-sheriff took the package, and at a glance saw written: "*For Miss Virgin Grey, to be opened and read after my death.*"

"You will see to it yourself that this letter reaches Miss Grey?"

"I will certainly deliver it in person, Mrs. Farrell."

"And this," said Agnes, giving the officer another letter, "is to be sent to my attorney, at *once*." She

looked at the man with clear, steadfast eyes, and seeing no hesitation in his face, added, "It is very important." The sheriff went his way and fulfilled his promise.

Virgin, with blinding tears, locked her precious missive in the place where she kept her most sacred treasures, knowing well that Agnes Farrell's last words to her would be as true as Holy Writ.

Counselor Lawrence read the letter addressed to him, as he sipped his morning coffee, in the sun-bright, flower-fragrant breakfast room, where the canary poured a flood of song that made the sunshine seem brighter. He read the letter in amazement, and dropped his head upon his hand; the sun-bright room went out in utter blackness.

"Have you bad news, Edward?" asked the anxious voice of his wife from behind the coffee urn, seeing distress painted on his face.

"Bad enough, Cornelia, dreadful! dreadful!"

Mrs. Lawrence rose and coming to her husband's place leaned over his shoulder and read:

"*I, Agnes Farrell, do solemnly aver before God, and by all I hold sacred, and as I hope ultimately for my soul's salvation, that I, unassisted and alone, without the knowledge of, or connivance of any other person or persons whatever, did, on the night of June twentieth, under my own roof and of my own will and purpose, murder my step-son, Joseph Farrell; and to this confession, freely made, I am now ready to have the seal of the notary placed, in the presence of whatever witnesses the court may elect.*

"*Agnes Farrell.*"

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed the attorney's wife, in a shocked voice.

"She certainly ought to know; the testimony was of the strongest kind, complete and consistent. I never thought we had the shadow of a case!"

"What will be done now, Edward?"

"Agnes Farrell will certainly and righteously be hanged."

"I pity her, but I am so glad Ernest Farrell is innocent; I could never bring myself to think for one moment that this beautiful and noble-looking young man was guilty."

"You women are governed a great deal too much by good looks; the greatest criminal I ever saw looked exactly like a model clergyman."

"But even clergymen do naughty things sometimes; do you not remember, dear, Mr. Green —"

"There, Cornelia, stop—he was only a sharper."

"I never thought Ernest Farrell looked the least like a clergyman, Edward; he always reminded me of one of those antique statues, let me see, was it in the Vatican? Yes, was it not Antinoüs, that was the image of youthful, manly beauty?"

"Rest assured, Cornelia, Ernest Farrell will not escape through his good looks; he must have a hearing, however, and if his mother's confession is sustained, on cross-examination, he will be set at liberty. Mrs. Farrell gave the impression throughout my interviews with her, before the trial, that there was some concealment. I questioned her closely, without result; but during the trial she was

composed and guarded, and I thought no more about it. Her confession will be a blow to her son, of that I am sure. Although the evidence criminated him equally with his mother; and our fight to exculpate him seemed to make matters worse. If the crime turns out to be only half as bad as the worst, we have something to be thankful for."

Edward Lawrence went without delay to the prosecutor, and together the two men went to see the judge.

"I am not surprised," said the judge; "the evidence could not be impeached. I am glad the young man had no hand in the murder, it is bad enough as it is."

"It remains to be seen, judge, if Ernest Farrell is innocent," said the prosecutor. "If the woman's confession explains the evidence against her son, he must be pardoned."

"The confession *explains* nothing; it is a simple confession of the deed," said Lawrence.

"It is a pity she did not make it sooner," replied the prosecutor, remembering his wasted eloquence.

"Well, you could not have gotten off your Cain-and-Abel story, if she had, Strong," said Lawrence. Perhaps the judicial presence alone saved Lawrence from a caning on the spot.

"Let the hearing be had to-morrow, gentlemen; we can not too soon make reparation for the mistake of convicting an innocent man."

"An innocent man, and the heir of his father,"

thought Benedict Strong, as he went his way. "However, I did my duty, the evidence convicted him—well and perhaps I had something to do with it. It is not every lawyer that succeeds in convicting the guilty, and to convict an innocent man requires some unusual skill. But we shall see. I may trap her."

CHAPTER XX.

THE HEARING.

THE court had appointed the day following the reading of Agnes Farrell's confession for the hearing of any new testimony she might bring to the case, in going over the old evidence, and comparing it with the new.

The prisoner was conducted to the court-room at her own request, alone. The judge, the attorneys on both sides of the case, the deputy-sheriff, a few old men, early risers, who straggled in at every open public door; and a vigilant reporter of local items for the *Claire County Gazette*, comprised the audience. Rumor was not yet astir.

Agnes Farrell entered with a composed air, and a look of resolute courage in her face, which had aged past all recognition by those who had known her as a beautiful, youthful-looking woman of fortune and fashion. She seated herself before the judge's desk with a slight inclination of her still stately head; for, as Brinkwater folks said, "Agnes Farrell held herself like a tree; it would take a hurricane to make her bend below the neck." All eyes were instantly fixed upon the prisoner as

she turned her own toward the judge. The court had just been discussing the theory of emotional insanity set up by the defense. Each man, as he looked at this proud, defiant woman, dismissed from his mind forever any possibility of convicting her of insanity.

Footsteps were heard moving in the corridor and as the mother felt the approach of her son it seemed as though all the blood in her body rushed in a tide of crimson shame to the roots of her gray hair; she did not move, or turn her head, but looked before her with stern, unseeing eyes; the receding blood left her face more deathly pale than ever, as she braced herself against the seat and tightened the rigor of her clinched hands. Ernest Farrell drew near, shaken with an emotion he could not control, and burdened with a sorrow that made all that had gone before seem pitiful indeed. Still she did not move, save for a tremor that vibrated through all her frame.

Her son was at her feet.

"Mother! Mother!" he cried.

"Kneel not to me, Ernest Farrell," she said brokenly; "do you not know the truth?"

"As there is a God in heaven, mother, I know the truth, inasmuch as it is known to either of us!"

Agnes Farrell addressed the judge: "Is the notary ready to receive my affidavit?" It seemed for an instant as if her fortitude must give way before the strain upon it.

The notary entered as she spoke, and, in the

presence of the witnesses set his seal against the firmly-written signature of Agnes Farrell. As he followed her movements with anxious eyes, Ernest pressed his hands upon his heart as though the anguish throbbing there would break it.

He saw his mother place her name to a sworn avowal of her guilt. She, to whom the truth was sacred; who looked upon a falsehood as the meanest, the most degrading of sins. Was it true? the mother that bore him, a self-confessed murderess! For a moment the awful thought overwhelmed him; he bowed his head as though the shame had been his death-blow, then he raised himself proudly, almost defiantly. He looked before him as though he clearly saw a way out of this dreadful strait; his teeth were clinched, his breath came hard, with expanding nostrils, and he threw out his hands as if he broke the fetters that bound his senses. But his love for his mother and his faith in her innocence were stronger than crime; stronger than shame; stronger than death itself. In that awful moment of doubt, his soul-lit vision saw revealed the weakness of human nature, the narrow limit that divides virtue from vice—one step and the hand of temptation stretched forth draws us over, and consenting, we are lost! There was a divine pity in the anguish that wrung his heart for the woman who had periled all for his dear sake; his only thought was for her, to comfort and sustain her through the valley of the shadow of a felon's death. No thought of igno-

miny reflected from her to him, moved him in that awful moment; he would gladly have died to save her. He sat down beside her and took her locked hands in his. The examination began:

"Agnes Farrell, you declare, upon oath, that you murdered your step-son, Joseph Farrell, on the night of June twentieth, alone, without the aid, knowledge or connivance of any other person or persons?"

No one looking upon the prisoner now could doubt her guilt. She turned deathly white, and writhed in her seat as though stung with intolerable remorse; her mental anguish was so great that the court paused as if expecting the soul of the guilty woman would escape in the throes that racked her frail body. The bailiff brought a glass of water and moistened her lips; a window was thrown open to admit fresh air, and Agnes raised her mournful eyes and fixed them on the square of azure. What she saw there, what mortal tongue shall say? Was it a vision of holy angels conducting her enfranchised soul to a world above the struggle, and pain, and anguish of this, to the blessed peace and rest of Heavenly seclusion?

The question which the court repeated fell unheeded on her ear. She sat with strangely smiling eyes, as though the blissful vision had caught her senses away, and wrapped them in oblivion. At last, as if communing with her own soul, she softly spoke: "I know that my Redeemer liveth; I know my sin shall be forgiven me; I know my son shall be re-

stored to me at the last day." Her whole aspect was so transfigured, her words so foreign to the earthly powers before which she sat, the court, seemingly aware that Agnes Farrell was responding to a higher tribunal, sat in breathless silence as though with her awaiting a final vindication.

At this moment the judge arose to welcome the governor, whom he had summoned by telegraph the day before to be present at the hearing of Agnes Farrell's confession, as an act of justice to Ernest Farrell, who was well known to him, and to expedite the cause of justice. The governor had made all possible speed and arrived just in time.

The prisoner, now restored to perfect consciousness and composure, the examination was continued :

" You murdered Joseph Farrell with your own hand, you say ? "

She bowed her head and buried her face in her hands.

" Answer ! "

" I did ; I did ! " her voice sounded so strangely shrill the court turned to see if another had not answered.

" You knew what your act meant, and involved ? " asked the court, moved out of its composure by the piteous sight of Ernest Farrell's woe.

" I think I am doing right—I thought I was—" she corrected herself.

" You are not here," interrupted the prosecutor, " to vindicate your act, but to corroborate your

confession, and give such testimony as will exonerate your son from any knowledge of, or complicity in the crime, which you avow you committed without his knowledge or consent?"

The words of the prosecutor indicated her reply, and she answered calmly and firmly:

"I am, your honor."

"You used chloroform before you used the knife?"

"I did."

"You hid the bloody knife and garments in the cellar?" A moment's pause.

"I hid them there."

"Did you see your son just before you committed the murder?" The court listened with bated breath.

"*No.*"

"Did you see him just afterward?"

"Yes—asleep—I went to his room to tell ——" her words died away in a whisper.

"Why did you not tell him?"

"My heart failed me."

"Then he did not awake at your approach?"

"No, no; he did not."

"How do you account for the blood on his bed linen?"

"I must have dropped it there."

"Did you intend to implicate your son?"

"Oh, no, *no!*"

"Were you not aware that under the circumstances your act would criminate him?"

"I thought of but one thing."

"And that was?"

"Our wrongs."

"Did you not know that the murder would be discovered, and you and your son would suffer for it?"

"I thought of all that *afterward.*"

"Why was your confession not made before the trial?"

"I hoped every thing from the trial."

"And then you delayed your confession——"

"Till it could be delayed no longer," she hurriedly answered.

"And you are willing to take the consequences of your act?"

"I am willing."

Under the most crucial cross-examination, Agnes Farrell never faltered in the testimony that sealed her death-warrant. She answered every question categorically, never contradicting herself, and growing calmer as the investigation proceeded, her answers prompted the court to closer inquiry.

The passionate protests of her son, which from time to time he essayed, were silenced by the court, and he sat a helpless and tortured spectator, seeing, as in a horrid phantasmagoria, the processes of the law, conducting his mother to her awful doom.

At last the examination was ended.

"Have you a confession to make, Ernest Farrell?" asked the prosecutor, as the young man

nervously arose and advanced to the judge's seat. "Have you aught to say why judgment should not be passed on your mother?" asked the judge.

"I have, your honor," cried the young man passionately, throwing himself at the feet of the judge, and clasping his knees. "I have! My mother is mad! She should not be held accountable for her words. Look at her! She is dying with grief and shame. Your honor knows her confession can not be true. She is sacrificing herself through her love of me. For God's sake, if this is justice, take my life also! I swear to you she is innocent, she is innocent."

Agnes Farrell arose, erecting her tall figure to its height, and raising her right hand, said solemnly, "*I am guilty.*"

Ernest Farrell did not stir from his posture of abject prostration at the feet of justice—he had found merciful relief in oblivion.

The governor, powerfully moved by this heart-rending scene, with a thrill of fear raised the fainting youth; in his heart he had already pardoned him, to which he soon added the official sanction and gubernatorial seal. Benedict Strong having waived a motion for a new trial, an order was given for the immediate release of Ernest Farrell.

As she heard the words of pardon, a gleam of joy, like a wintry sun, lit the face of the condemned woman: she stooped and pressed a farewell kiss on the lips of her still unconscious son as she went out of the court-room bowed down beneath a load

of crime and shame. She would never hold up her head again; the hurricane had swept over her, and the haughty Agnes Farrell was laid low forever.

* * * * * *

The news of Mrs. Farrell's confession reached Brinkwater early in the day, and was the magnet that drew all the village folk together. There was an intense feeling of relief: a murder had been committed in their community, the law had proved it, as only the law could, and now came the acknowledgment.

Circumstantial evidence had been supplemented by confession, and Brinkwater's sense of justice was satisfied.

"She took her oath on it, and with all her faults, I never knowed Agnes Farrell to tell a lie," said Jim Denby.

There was genuine rejoicing over Ernest's pardon. "I knowed *he* was innocent. I allus stuck to *that*," crowed the grave-digger.

"Now none o' yer flappin' o' wings, and cock-a-doodle-doin' afore the rain's over, Jim Denby. Ye jist guessed it, like the rest of us," cried Betsey Driggs.

"Only some of the rest of us guessed t'other way, you know, Betsey," retorted Jim.

"One w'd think grave-diggin' had given ye second sight, Jim, ye seem so mortal gifted. *I* allus heard as *moles* was blind."

"Them as won't see 's the blindest, Betsey,"

"I s'pose Agnes Farrell 'll insist on bein' buried at Brinkwater. I don't see how the church-yard 'll hold em *both*," said Betsey, changing the subject to one in which she thought she had the advantage.

"The church-yard ain't objectin' as much as ye air, Betsey Driggs, and this is a matter that's too big fer you and me : we'd better leave it in the hands of the Lord, where it belongs," replied Denby, moving off to escape further controversy.

"That old grave-digger's onbearable," was Betsey's parting thought, as she went on her way. "Every time he digs a grave in Brinkwater church-yard he thinks he's diggin' a hole clear through to heaven, and 's on intimate terms up there, but I guess there's holes, and holes," she said.

CHAPTER XXI.

AT THE LAWYER'S.

AFTER his mother had left the court-room, Ernest Farrell sat like one stunned. The judge approached him with extended hand; no, it would not do to congratulate this man who looked like a lost soul that the fiat of the Awful Judge of mankind had doomed to endless punishment. He gave no sign of life; if he could have been turned to stone there, his mighty agony would have made remotest ages weep.

Mr. Lawrence took him by the arm and gently led him away; he followed, unresisting, unknowing, as one walks in a dream. When they got outside they found the whole town alive; rumor was winged; the news flew from mouth to mouth; knots of men gathered on the street-corners were discussing it; the small boy arrested on his way to school by the excitement in the streets, formed in line, ready to join in an impromptu procession; house-maids stood agape, and all Marshmeadows knew that Agnes Farrell had confessed to the murder, and her son had received his acquittal.

"I always knowed, somehow, it would turn out

that way," said the first gossip, "Agnes Farrell's had murder in her heart fer twenty year."

"I am heartily glad the young man's innocent anyhow," said number two, who had some human charity.

"Yes, he may live to be a useful man, now his mother's to be taken from him, and he's got his father's money. Strange that such a mother should have such a son."

"His father's money's only been a curse, so far; it's to be hoped he'll make better use of it than the others did."

"I wonder what Virgin Grey will do now; do you think she'll marry a man whose mother's hung for murder?" asked a young girl-gossip.

"She stuck by him when he was condemned for murder, and she'll marry him if his mother does hang," was the answer.

"Well, I'd hate to have my children know that their granny died at a rope's end," she said.

The carriage of Mr. Lawrence rolled by. Ernest had stepped into it involuntarily and only spoke when they reached the home of the attorney, where they were rapidly driven.

"Not here, Lawrence," he said, when, at last he saw that he was not being conducted back to the jail, "the roof that shelters my mother is all my wretchedness asks."

"But you can do her no good there, Farrell," said the attorney, stepping down, and offering Ernest his hand.

"I can be near her at least," sighed the young man.

"Come in with me, Ernest, a little while," answered his friend pleadingly, "my wife expects you, and you need counsel and sympathy just now." He seemed to have no energy to resist. Mrs. Lawrence met him at the door with outstretched hands of welcome. She uttered not a word, but her tender eyes were swimming in tears, and she put up her sweet, matronly face and kissed him.

"Oh, Edward," she said that night, as she awoke her husband. "I can not sleep for thinking of him. He has been walking the floor the whole night, and when he stops, my heart stands still for fear—" She finished the sentence in a whisper with her lips to his ear.

"No, he will not do *that*, Cornelia; he will live to see his wretched mother decently buried, and to vindicate her memory, for he truly believes she is innocent. And there is Virgin Grey, you know."

"Oh, yes, poor child! what will she do?"

"If she is the girl I take her to be, she will marry Ernest Farrell at once."

"But, Edward, how can she take his name with that dreadful stain upon it?"

"My dear, I think in these few months Virgin Grey has outlived the poetry of love and has come to the plain prose now. They may make together a noble poem of life, and I believe they will, all the nobler, too, for this bitter experience. What

would you do under such circumstances? Ask your own heart, Cornelia."

"If it were *you*, Edward," she said, putting her fond arms around his neck, "I think, yes, I am sure, I would marry you."

"Well, thank heaven, my love, that we have not been put to such a trial," he said, kissing her troubled brow.

The lawyer rose, dressed himself, and went to the room of the stricken man. They talked until the morning sun shone in at the windows, and when Mr. Lawrence closed the door of his friend's chamber and met his wife in the breakfast-room, he told her of all Ernest Farrell meant to do.

CHAPTER XXII.

A DEATH-BED CONFESSION.

THE sheriff lingered in a low form of fever that followed acute inflammation of the brain. He had grown calm as he grew weaker ; but his wandering thoughts no longer revolved around his prisoners and their fate. His talk now was wholly of his absent son, whom he saw before him continually in some desperate peril from which the unhappy father endeavored in vain to rescue him. Sometimes it was from the mast of a ship he saw him hang ; sometimes it was an approaching train that rushed down upon him ; again it was the edge of a precipice from which he fell, or an abyss that ingulfed him.

At first, Mary Martin feared her husband had by some means discovered Dick's presence in the house ; but the sheriff never questioned her about their son, and she came to know it was only the old trouble, so long concealed, that his delirium had brought to the surface.

Dick was rapidly sinking.

"They are both running a race with death," said the doctor to Martha Blunt, "and there is no telling which will reach the goal first."

"He's hanging from that yard-arm, Mary," said the sheriff one day, with a look of horror in his face; "there is nothing under his feet; if the yard breaks he will fall into the sea. Oh, it looks like a gallows!" Or sometimes he was far away and homesick, and he would ask piteously, "When will I get home, Mary? I have been gone such a weary time. This seems to be an endless road: these wheels have been running over my heart so long! Can't you stop them, Mary?"

But the wheels were running more slowly now, the sheriff had passed the crisis, and the danger was over.

The doctor told Mrs. Martin that Dick's days were numbered, and the end might come at any time.

"Dare I tell him, doctor? Oh, I *must* let him know. He has repented, I am sure, but I must know if he dies willingly and happy."

"It can make no difference, now, what you tell him," said the doctor, "I think your son knows he is done with the things of this world, Mrs. Martin."

"Why do you look so sorry, mother?" Dick asked, as Mary Martin bent over him with the divine compassion that appears in the face of every mother as she surrenders her offspring to the cold embrace of that presence we call Death.

"I am sorry, Dick."

"Sorry for *me*, mother?"

"Oh, sorry for myself, Dick."

"Is father worse, mother?"

"Father is better."

"Then it's me that makes you sorry for yourself?"

"Yes, dear."

"I have never made you any thing but sorry, mother!"

"Don't say that, Dick. I was a glad and proud mother, when you were born, my son."

"And you will be glad, mother, when I am dead!"

"No, my child; I must mourn."

Dick lay thoughtful for a long time after this conversation. He knew his hours were numbered. Then he said:

"Mother, I have watched the doctor's face, and know he thinks I can't get well."

"I know, Dick," she sobbed.

"And now I must atone as far as I can for the wrongs I have done. I will ask you, dear mother, to go away for a little while, and send the deputy-sheriff and the notary here. I should like to talk to them first. I wish Artey was here."

"Artey is here, Richard."

"Then, after a while, I must send for him, too."

The sheriff and the notary came into the room soon afterward. Dick was propped up on his pillows, white as the linen that covered them.

"I am ready to take your deposition," said the notary, seating himself at a table and taking out his paper and ink. He turned toward the dying boy.

"I killed Joseph Farrell," gasped Dick, with a desperate determination to have the worst over at once.

"Had you an accomplice?" asked the startled officer, who had just a few days before attested Mrs. Farrell's confession.

"Yes, I had."

"Who?"

"Artey Blunt, the idiot."

"Was there a woman concerned in the case?"

"Yes, a woman was at the bottom of it all."

"Mrs. Farrell?"

"No, no, *not* Mrs. Farrell, she could not have been."

"Who was the woman?"

"Margaret Merrill. I had best tell the story from the first," said Dick. "I can get on faster."

"Go on," replied the notary, "and remember you are under oath."

"I mean to tell the whole truth," said Dick. "I loved Margaret Merrill; she was older than I was, but I loved her from the time I was a school-boy, when she was a pretty and soft little thing with golden curls and cheeks like roses. She was so good to me and helped me with my lessons, and always came to my aid when I got into trouble, which was pretty much all the time. I meant to

marry her when I was able, for I did not believe she cared any thing for Joseph Farrell, who was always hanging around her on the sly. Well, they went off together at last. I knew he had promised to marry her, but I did not intend he should if I could help it. I forged that note you know about, sheriff, and got the money, and followed them. I could not find them in New York where I tracked them, and I knew as soon as I came to my senses, I was liable for arrest, and I dared not go home, so I shipped before the mast in a vessel that was going out on a two years' cruise. I knew Margaret was lost to me, and I must look out for my safety now. When we got back to port my health was broken and they would not allow me to go out with the vessel again, so I wandered about New York awhile, hoping to find Margaret. I was so changed by sickness, and the hardships of the life I had led, that the Claire County folks would not have known me if I had gone back : but I was afraid to see father.

" I was walking the streets, one night, when I saw a woman and a man in front of me who were walking very slow and talking earnestly. They stopped under a lamp-post and I saw the man give the woman some money and walk rapidly away. I caught up with her and found it was Margaret Merrill, but she did not know me. I spoke to her and she looked round and said : 'I know your voice, but I do not know your face, sir.'

" 'Oh, Margaret, I am Richard Martin,' I said. She was so glad to see me though she knew I was

a forger. I told her I was an outcast and had no place to go.

"'I am an outcast too,' she answered; 'that man who has just left me, saw me and his child turned into the street. I have earned a humble shelter since, Dick, and if you will share it with me, you are welcome. I earn a little money with my needle, and I beg from him when I happen to meet him, which is not often.'

"'Didn't Joseph Farrell marry you, Margaret?' I asked in a rage.

"'He imposed upon me with a mock marriage, Dick. I believed it all right and you can guess the rest.'

"She was so changed and old, that it broke my heart to see her. I had a little money and I gave it to her, for I knew she would make it do more than I could.

"Margaret's health broke down at last and our little stock of money was soon gone for medicines and doctor's bills.

"The woman we rented the miserable rooms of would not keep us when she knew our money was gone. Margaret and the baby were sent to the alms-house, and I wandered about, finding a shelter where I could. I had heard from Margaret, of Andrew Farrell's death, and how the property had been willed, and I then made up my mind I would go home, and if I met Joseph Farrell there, have it out with him. I went to see Margaret before I left for home; the baby was dead; the fever had come

back, and she was raving mad, and did not know me. She talked all the time about the man who had wronged her, and I took a vow by her bedside that if I ever saw him again I would get even with him.

"I got back to Brinkwater, sometimes walking and sometimes stealing rides on the railroad. Just as I was crossing the strip of woods between town and Brinkwater Heights, on the evening of the twentieth of June, I found I was just in time, for I met Joseph Farrell on his way to the Farrell mansion. He called to me to halt, and threatened if I stayed in the neighborhood to give me up. I couldn't help but curse him, and he caught me by the throat and before I knew what was coming, struck me across the face with his heavy cane. You can see the scar yet," said Dick, pointing to the red mark on his cheek. "I knew I was no match for the brute, but my turn would come and I bided my time. I watched him out of sight, and then I made for the Farrell stables, where I meant to hide myself, knowing they weren't used, though the loft I found was full of hay. I saw Artey Blunt prowling around, having come up, he said, to bid the pigeons good-night. We had always been great friends, and many a fine time we had had hunting and fishing together. Artey was glad to see me again, and consented, when I asked him to stay with me all night in the loft. He gave me a part of his supper, for he was fond of eating out of doors, and I got from him all I wanted to know. He told me Joseph Farrell was expected to stay that night at the house, for he and

his mother had got the spare room ready. He pulled a key out of his pocket that he had taken, he told me, from a door of this room, which opened on an ante-room, and was seldom used. I knew he had a habit of picking any bright thing that pleased him, and this shining brass-key gave me the chance I wanted. I bought it of Artey for a little police-man's whistle which I had, and which made a louder noise than the one he used when he called the pigeons.

"My plan was laid at once. I knew the Farrell house from garret to cellar. I had often been there when a boy. Mr. Ernest had saved my life once, and after that I seemed to belong to him.

"I knew I should have no trouble with Artey. He came and went, and nobody hindered him. I could trust him, for he had a good memory, and he never forgot a threat. Many a secret we had together and he never betrayed me. An awful storm came up and before the rain fell, while the thunder was rattling, we climbed to the dove-cot, I following Artey up the ivy. It was an easy job for a sailor. I had plenty of matches, and we only had to pull off some loose boards to get into the attic. I saw an old pair of pantaloons hanging on a line, which Artey said belonged to him, and as it was my plan to throw the blame on the idiot, I took off my own pantaloons in the dark and put on his. We took off our shoes and stole down the attic stairs and listened at the closed door; there was not a sound but the heavy falling of the rain,

which favored us. There was a dim light burning in the hall, and we could see very well to get around. The night being hot Mrs. Farrell's door had been left open, and we went in there first; the room was full of the smell of chloroform and she seemed to be sleeping soundly. From the doorway a flash of lightning showed every thing in the room. Among the things I saw, for my eyes were turned toward the bed, was a yellow silk dressing-gown and a bottle of chloroform on a chair near the bed-side. I had only to put out my hand to reach them. I gave the dressing-gown to Artey, which he immediately put on. I took a handkerchief from the pocket and filled it with chloroform and placed it over Mrs. Farrell's mouth. I soon knew from her heavy breathing she was under its influence and took it away, for I meant to use it again. Mr. Ernest's room was far from the others, but I had always known he was a sound sleeper, so I did not think it necessary to take any precautions with him. I stopped at his door, however, to make sure he was asleep, and knew from his deep and regular breathing that he was.

"Joseph Farrell's door opened easily enough under the carefully turned key. The attic door stood open and we had only to turn and fly if he made the least movement; but he was in a dead sleep and had gone to bed leaving the shutters wide open, so that the constant play of lightning made every thing plain, and I had only to take advantage of the returning darkness to do my

work. I used the chloroform first. I knew the drug well, for I always had carried a small vial of it which the ship's surgeon had given me to still my cough at night: the last of which I had used and thrown the bottle away in the stable. Artey was looking out of the window with both hands to the side of his face and his back toward the bed. I hadn't yet made up my mind just what I would do, but I meant to put my mark on Joseph Farrell for life, as he had put his mark on me. But when I saw his sleek, villainous face, the thought of Margaret and her wretched fate made a madman of me, and I lost all self-control, and had done the deed almost before I knew what I was about. Artey never knew what happened, but I told him afterward that Joseph Farrell would never beat either of us again, which pleased him so much that it was all I could do to keep him from laughing aloud.

"He would have blown the whistle he carried if I had not snatched it from him, and thrown it under the bed, with a purpose. Then I lit the lamp and put the room in order, while Artey paraded himself before the glass. I knew Joseph Farrell had plenty of money, and I had none, so I helped myself from his pocket-book to enough to take me back to New York. Then we went down stairs, Artey carrying the things I wanted to hide. I did not dream at the time of getting Ernest Farrell into trouble; he was my best friend, and I meant to revenge his wrongs too, and would not have injured him for the world; but I had no time to think of all this

till it was too late. I went to his room; he did not stir as I leaned over him and I felt no fear of his waking, but the impulse that had brought me there, to tell him what I had done, shrank appalled at the thought of his innocence, and I turned and fled. I had now but one hope—escape—and one desire, the turning of suspicion from myself to Artey, who, I knew, was not accountable to the law.

"We came near being discovered as we went down stairs. Just as I got into the shadow of the lower hall, and as Artey was coming down with the things, Mrs. Farrell came out of her room and called faintly over the banister, but she was still under the influence of the chloroform, and turned away in the direction of her room. Artey knew where to find the cellar-door key, and by the light of a match that I had struck, I saw a great kitchen-knife lying on the table, which I had often seen in the hands of Artey when he sharpened it for his mother's use. I put it in the place of my own and rolled it up with the gown and towel and carried them down to the cellar. By a strange piece of luck the cellar key unlocked the back hall-door, the key of which Mrs. Blunt must have taken, as it was not in the lock. When I got into the house I locked the back door with the cellar key and put it in its place again. Artey was half-way up stairs, but I stopped him and listened to hear if all was quiet.

"When we got back to the garret where I had left my pantaloons, I changed again, throwing

Artey's old ones under the eaves where they would likely be found by any one searching the dove-cot. Then I made for the woods, after swearing the idiot to secrecy, and making a dreadful threat to kill him if he mentioned my name in connection with that night's work.

"I knew every step of the country in Claire County and I went for the nearest railroad. At a little station, I hid myself under the first train that pulled out and got to New York without any trouble. I meant to visit Margaret, and then go to sea again ; but when I got to the alms-house I found Margaret was dead, and buried. I loved that woman as I never loved another, beside my mother, and her death took all the courage out of me. I did not care whether I lived or died. I worked about at odd jobs, doing all I could to make my money last, but I could find no peace till I should hear news from home. I saw in one of the daily papers an account of the murder : the paper was six weeks old, and was wrapped around a lunch I had bought. I had avoided the papers, and indeed all public places, for I was afraid of being arrested on the old count, and I knew if I was taken back it would be all over with me.

"Then I learned that Mrs. Farrell and Ernest were arrested for the murder. I still kept away, believing that the evidence would accuse Artey on the trial. I watched the papers after that, stinting myself of food to buy them, and all I read went to show that these two innocent people would die for

a crime they did not commit. I had no rest day nor night after that. I must get back, and if necessary confess in time to save them. But I meant to wait till the last moment. I knew there was a strong case against the idiot. His habit of nightly wandering, known to the whole neighborhood, his visits to the dove-cot, of which the family must have known, his concealed trowsers, with blood on them, for I had seen to that ; the whistle found in the dead man's room ; the kitchen-knife that the boy had so often sharpened; the putting on of the yellow gown, the color of which had always attracted him and had been taken from his person several times ; the bottle of chloroform with bloody prints on it, half hid among the china trinkets on the mantel ; all this, with the idiot's well known hatred of Joseph Farrell, who had once badly beaten him when he had been trusted to ride a valuable mare to water, and had ridden off with her and ruined her; his familiarity with the very room in which the murder was committed, seemed to me would make a very bad showing for Artey. I was afraid if he ever became a witness, he might betray me, but I hoped too, from his stubbornness when questioned, that he would keep my secret, for he was very close-mouthed, and always dodged a direct question. He had often puzzled me. But if it came to the worst I meant to confess to the deed. I was desperate when I committed the murder ; the woman I would have died for, Joseph Farrell ruined and flung into the gutter, and because I loved, and

knew that he had undone her, he pursued me with his hatred. The world was not wide enough for me and Joseph Farrell ; one of us had to go. That is all."

Then the idiot was sent for. He came into the room cowering with fear at the sight of the sick man and the officers. Dick called him to the bedside, and took his trembling hand in his cold one.

" Artey," he said, " I am going away, and shall never come back. You may tell our secret now, for it can hurt neither of us. You were with me in the room the night I went for Joseph Farrell, weren't you ? "

" I never told," said the idiot, " you swore you would kill me, if I did."

" Yes, but you must tell, now I ask you to tell all that you know about it."

Not until Martha Blunt was sent for did the idiot yield up the story of the murder, but by her skillful coaxing and questioning, a corroboration of Dick's testimony was obtained. Martha Blunt was deeply distressed at the shameful use made of her idiot son, and only forgave Dick when he told her that Artey's assistance was passive, and he had no idea of the work to be done beyond the punishing of Joseph Farrell. He did not, at any time, seem to grasp the murder, although he knew that Joseph Farreil was dead and buried, but the gossip of the village made no impression on his volatile mind. His only thought after the murder and the dispersion of the family, was for the pigeons, lest he be

separated from them, and they, through his neglect, should come to harm. All lesser feelings in the heart of Martha Blunt gave way, however, before her joy in Agnes Farrell's escape ; her son she knew would not suffer beyond, perhaps, confinement, and with that she was content.

The housekeeper was sent for in some haste, and went below while the deputy-sheriff and the notary finished the examination. It was midnight when the last words of the confession were written. Richard Martin was greatly excited by the efforts he had made, and never rallied from the exhaustion that followed.

Mrs. Martin entered the room the moment the officers left it.

"It's done, and I feel better," was Dick's greeting. "Here is a letter, mother, I have written at odd times, I thought you would want to read what I have told the officers, after I am gone, and if I had died before to-morrow, you know it would have been useful to father. Remember, mother, you said you would forgive me, no matter how wicked I had been. You meant it, mother ?"

"Richard, there is no choice, a mother must forgive her erring child."

"I am sorry for it all, mother, and the grief I have caused you and father. Ask him to forgive me, too. It was hard to make up my mind to come home after I had dishonored you. I hid myself in Mrs. Farrell's loft for weeks before I was driven to face you, mother. The night father came to the

house, he almost caught me. I had gone to the dove-cot to get the bread and stuff I knew Artey brought there to the pigeons, and without which I should have starved, and I had to run for my life and get back to my hiding-place. When he came to the stable for his horse, and heard me moving overhead, he thought it was Artey, and called, 'Come, my boy, your mother wants you!' it seemed to me that you had sent him, and I must go. He touched me with his foot once, when he was searching the loft, but it was not given father to find—the man he was looking for, thank God!

"I think there were two Dick Martins, mother, one was always warring against the other, and the bad Dick generally won. If I should get well, may be I'd be bad again, it is better to go now while I am sorry and wish to do right. I have suffered a great deal—and deserved to. If there is any excuse to be found for me, I know you will find it. And, mother, when the baby grows up, don't let him know he had a wicked brother. I do not want him to hate me. Tell him about the baby-Richard. I saw his little picture in your work-basket, and he looked so pretty and innocent. I never thought he would come to this pass; did you, mother?"

She sorrowfully shook her head, too full of woe for words.

"I had a foolish wish to take it with me, it seemed a part of my innocence, but I will leave it

with you, dear mother; keep it in your work-basket, and when you are tempted to think hardly of me, let its baby beauty plead for your dead boy, and try to forget the Richard Martin that ran away, and went wrong; or, only remember him to pray for him. We never—know—how—we—will—act—till—we—are tempt——" breath failed him; he threw his weary arms above his head, and with one long sigh expired.

Mary Martin guessed the truth now, but all her soul went out in love, and pity, and forgiveness toward the weak and erring soul of her first-born.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MARRIAGE AND A REPRIEVE.

IT was midnight when the deputy-sheriff and notary public waked the judge and asked for instructions. "Inform Mrs. Farrell at once," the judge commanded, when the first sentence of the confession was read to him. "This is monstrous! You say the villain who committed the murder is dead? No? He deserves hanging, if he is on a dying bed."

But there was to be no execution on the morrow; death had forestalled the work of the hangman. The useless gallows, that stood as a menace to evil-doers, must be taken down before another sun should rise upon the shameful thing.

In his amazement at the turn matters had taken, the deputy-sheriff had totally forgotten that the marriage rite was to be solemnized between Ernest Farrell and Virgin Grey, in the cell of the prisoner, at her request. He went down with the confession of Richard Martin, meaning to have the marriage ceremony postponed until a happier hour and fitter place was found.

But Martha Blunt had been before him. Ernest and Virgin, accompanied by the clergyman and Mrs. and Mr. Lawrence, had driven to the sheriff's house, and Martha, having charge of the prison keys, had admitted them to the cell of Agnes Farrell. The ceremony was in progress as the deputy-sheriff appeared at the door of the cell, and he dare not intrude upon the solemn scene, even with his joyful tidings.

Virgin, clothed in black, with a white covering on her head, looked like a young nun receiving her vows of renunciation, rather than a happy maiden wedding a loving and beloved bridegroom. Ernest Farrell went through the ceremony with the air of a man who was performing a sacred duty to gratify the wish of a dying mother.

Agnes Farrell stood more unmoved than any of the company in the black and dimly-lighted cell. Her tall form, attenuated to emaciation by grief and long confinement, was draped for the grave in a loose, white, flowing robe. Her noble and aquiline features were lighted by a serene joy that transfigured her wan and wasted face. Her crown of snow-white hair gave her the aspect of a venerable priestess presiding at some holy, religious rite.

Outside the prison walls a strange, weird scene was in progress. The starless midnight heavens were lit up by a red glare that threw a wild, fantastic light on every object: the hideous gallows and

the massive prison loomed black against it. The people, swarming in the streets, were metamorphosed in the crimson glow.

"I wonder if it's the millennium?" said one.

"No, it's the o-rory-bory-allis," said another.

"Then the aurora borealis and the millennium looks mightily like a house a-fire," said a third, "and it's Brinkwater ways—looks like the whole town was burnin' up. It's only two miles acrost, ain't it?"

"Yes. It's Brinkwater Heights, too. If I were goin' to give a guess, I'd say it was the Farrell homestid."

"Here comes Jim Denby, he'll know all about it," continued the last speaker, as the little grave-digger, out of breath from running across fields, with his momentous news, rushed upon the scene with his hair on end like a blown comet.

Yes, it was true. The stables had caught and communicated the fire to the house, in the night, and when the excited denizens of Brinkwater were aroused it was too late to do any thing. Denby, in the futile hope of getting aid, had run all the way to Marshmeadows.

"How strange," said an old woman, gifted with the power to instruct, "how strange the house should ketch a-fire the very night afore the hangin'! Seems like there's a providence in it."

"Ye needn't be makin' a pack-horse o' Providence to carry yer ill natur'. I guess Providence

'll get along without yer help," said Denby with indignant emphasis.

"I don't see as the Farrells air goin' to git along without your'n, Jim; one would think you had had a finger in the murder yerself, ye're so tetchy about them as had."

"*Them*, as had!" roared Denby; "ef you're includin' Ernest Farrell in that remark, why you're a liar, that's all!"

"I'm not countin' in Ernest Farrell," retorted the other, "but I guess it'll take a power o' henderin' providences to save his mother from swingin'."

"And *you* wouldn't be one of 'em if you had the chance," said Denby.

"Don't be slingin' your words round so promiscuous," broke in David Fry, who had been conducting a fervid revival meeting and had come upon the scene followed by the whole congregation to witness the great fire. "Isn't thet foreshadowin' of hell?" pointing to the gallows, "enough to make ye hold your reproachful tongues? 'Twas hot words help't to build *that*."

"It seems to set yours a waggin', David," said the grave-digger.

"Oh, it's his privilege to wag; it's bread and butter to him," answered Denby's companion.

But all warring words were silenced now, for a sudden rumor thrilled the air; a ripple went over the multitude, a movement of the mass, as though an impulse of rescue had seized it like a panic, and

a wild shout tore the air as the crowd surged toward the jail and poured like a flood into the open corridor.

The ceremony in the cell of Agnes Farrell, that united forever the two beings she loved best, was over ; the minister and all the company were kneeling and had joined in the last prayer for the newly-wedded pair, and the woman who believed herself so soon to die a shameful death.

"SAVE HER ! SAVE HER !" shouted the excited crowd, ere the prayer was ended. Not one of the throng had had a thought for the salvation of Agnes Farrell when she needed a saviour, and now that all danger was past, each was eager to lend a helping hand.

She heard the first words of Richard Martin's confession, the cry of the multitude, and saw in the face of her son a transport of joy that turned the prison gloom to sunlight. She raised her eyes and cast a look of yearning love upon him ; addressing him, rather than the crowd of spectators that swam before her vision like figures in a dream, she said :

"I thought God had forsaken us, and I forswore myself to save my son." She slid from his embrace and fell at his feet. "Forgive, forgive your mother, my child !"

He stooped and raised her with tears of rapture raining down his cheeks. A smile of ineffable beauty transfigured her face. She clung a moment to his neck, then her weary arms relaxed, the heavy

eyelids drooped, she would have sunk in a heap on the prison floor if his strong arms had not sustained her.

"This shock of joy is too great for her weakness," said the rector. "She has fainted; clear the cell, and give her air!"

They bore her to the cot and laid her down: every effort was made to restore her, but it was too late—Agnes Farrell's sufferings were over. She had got her reprieve from a higher tribunal!

* * * * * *

Brinkwater was at peace. The long feud between Agnes Farrell and her step-son was over. The turf of the village church-yard swelled greenly above them both. Nature is no respecter of persons. The butterfly, the bird, the bee, that swam in the drowsy summer air paid their impartial visits to each grave. All was made decent by the dignity of death.

* * * * * *

The evening light was waning as two men, in earnest talk, took their way through Brinkwater church-yard.

"They say he's comin' back," said the grave-digger, sitting down on a tombstone, and turning his dim eyes on David Fry, who took his place beside him, "and nobody 'll be gladder of it than I'll be."

"Five year in a foreign land 'ill likely make

him vally his own country more'n ever," replied David Fry.

"I don't know as he ever went back on his own country," said Denby, disposed, from long habit, to defend every act of Ernest Farrell's.

"No, 'twas some of his countrymen came pretty nigh goin' back on him," said Fry, facetiously.

"Aren't ye ever goin' to let that ghost rest?" asked Denby sorrowfully. "I'd like to dig one more grave, and that so deep and wide it would bury all the evil, wagging tongues in Claire County."

"And as fer as I'm consarned, I'd like to read the burial-service over 'em," said David Fry.

"Well, David," returned Denby, "let's look on the funeral as over fer you and me, and see to it that we treat Ernest Farrell, when he comes back, with his wife and children, as a man who suffered shame and sorrow for the sake o' the truth, and look on the new house he's goin' to build, on the ruins of the old one, as a sort o' monument to Agnes Farrell, whose terrible suffering has taught us a lesson in charity we won't be likely soon to forgit."

"Amen," responded David Fry.

* * * * * *

"I've many blessings, Mary; you and our boy are the first, and greatest," said Samuel Martin, now no longer Sheriff of Claire County: "and many things to be thankful for; but for nothing am I

more thankful and grateful, than that Agnes Farrell and her son escaped, as by fire, a shameful and unmerited death ; and," he added, after a pause, " that Richard Martin died in his bed."

THE END.

PEARS' SOAP

a Specialty for Children

The best for the Complexion. . . "A balm for the Skin."
The most economical; it wears to thinness of a wafer.

It is undoubtedly true that more children have been successfully reared by the use of Ridge's Food than by the use of all the other foods combined.

Do not experiment with your child, but take the food that has stood the test of time.

PUBLIC OPINION

Justifies the claim that Ridge's Food is the best daily diet for children. It makes bone, muscle, nerve tissue, and in every way builds up the system of the growing child.

These are Solid Facts:

BROOKFIELD, MASS., Feb. 12, 1884.

My little granddaughter, now about ten months old, weighed at birth but

THREE POUNDS.

Neither doctor nor nurse had any expectation of her living to be a month old. She was fed on cow's milk about a month, and the gain was hardly perceptible. Then, by the advice of the physician, she was fed on RIDGE'S FOOD, prepared according to directions, and gained five ounces the first week. She has used no other food since, and now we are proud to tell you she is as hearty and as fine a child of her age as can be seen anywhere.

Yours truly,
H. H. PHETTEPLACE.

BOSTON, MASS., July 2, 1883.

Nine years ago, a puny infant niece of mine was taken from the arms of its consumptive mother to be cared for temporarily in my family. My wife put it immediately upon a diet of RIDGE'S FOOD exclusively. The healthful growth of the child was very remarkable. At the end of three months, when returned to its home, it had become such a plump, rosy-cheeked child as to be hardly recognizable even to its mother. The child has ever since enjoyed perfect health. I have known of several other cases of the use of RIDGE'S FOOD among my neighbors and friends and always with the same satisfactory results.

DAN'L L. MILLIKEN.

Send to Woolrich & Co., Palmer, Mass., for pamphlet, entitled, "Healthful Hints," sent FREE to any address. Mention

ORDERS BY MAIL.

JAMES McCREERY & CO.

Invite correspondence in regard to Samples and prices of their varied lines of Silk, Woolen, and Cotton Dress Materials. Black Silks, Colored Satins, Printed Pongees, Mixed and Check Cheviots for Summer Wear, Sateens, Ginghams, and all Wash Fabrics are kept in select variety. Orders by letter are filled by our most experienced salesmen, and with assured satisfaction to the customers.

JAMES McCREERY & CO.,

Broadway and 11th Street, New York.

WHO IS JOHN NOMAN?

A NOVEL.

By CHARLES HENRY BECKETT.

One Volume, 16mo, extra cloth, Price, $1.00. Paper 50 Cents.

"Head and shoulders above many American novels which we are constantly bidden to love and to praise."—*New York Herald.*

"Great ingenuity, and more particularly great originality, are shown in the way the whole plot and its denouement are handled."—*New York Star.*

"It exhibits a breadth of culture and a strength of plot for which we may well be grateful."—*The Critic.*

"The plot is novel and intense."—*Boston Journal.*

"The appreciation of the 'true inwardness' of some current social problems uncommonly keen, just, and fearless."—*Chicago Times.*

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited,

104—106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

WHAT AILS YOU?

Do you feel dull, languid, low-spirited, lifeless, and indescribably miserable, both physically and mentally; experience a sense of fullness or bloating after eating, or of "goneness," or emptiness of stomach in the morning, tongue coated, bitter or bad taste in mouth, irregular appetite, dizziness, frequent headaches, blurred eyesight, "floating specks" before the eyes, nervous prostration or exhaustion, irritability of temper, hot flushes, alternating with chilly sensations, sharp, biting, transient pains here and there, cold feet, drowsiness after meals, wakefulness, or disturbed and unrefreshing sleep, constant, indescribable feeling of dread, or of impending calamity?

If you have all, or any considerable number of these symptoms, you are suffering from that most common of American maladies—Bilious Dyspepsia, or Torpid Liver, associated with Dyspepsia, or Indigestion. The more complicated your disease has become, the greater the number and diversity of symptoms. No matter what stage it has reached, **Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery** will subdue it, if taken according to directions for a reasonable length of time. If not cured, complications multiply, and Consumption of the Lungs, Skin Diseases, Heart Disease, Rheumatism, Kidney Disease, or other grave maladies are quite liable to set in, and, sooner or later, induce a fatal termination.

Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery

CURES ALL HUMORS,

from a common Blotch, or Eruption, to the worst Scrofula. Salt-rheum, "Fever-sores," Scaly or Rough Skin, in short, all diseases caused by bad blood, are conquered by this powerful, purifying, and invigorating medicine. Great Eating Ulcers rapidly heal under its benign influence. Especially has it manifested its potency in curing Tetter, Eczema, Erysipelas, Boils, Carbuncles, Sore Eyes, Scrofulous Sores and Swellings, Hip-joint Disease, "White Swellings," Goitre, or Thick Neck, and Enlarged Glands.

CONSUMPTION,

which is **Scrofula of the Lungs,** is arrested and cured by this remedy, if taken in the earlier stages of the disease.

For Weak Lungs, Spitting of Blood, Shortness of Breath, Chronic Nasal Catarrh, Bronchitis, Asthma, Severe Coughs, and kindred affections, it is an efficient remedy.

Sold by Druggists, at $1.00, or Six Bottles for $5.00.

World's Dispensary Medical Association,

No. 663 Main Street, BUFFALO, N. Y.

$500 REWARD is offered by the manufacturers of **Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy** for a case of Chronic Catarrh which they cannot cure. Remedy sold by druggists 50 cents.

HAGAN'S
MAGNOLIA BALM
BEST FOR COMPLEXION
TRY IT
Magnolia Balm makes the Skin Soft & Beautiful as the Lily.
Magnolia Balm makes Face, Neck, Arms and Hands White & Plump.
Magnolia Balm overcomes Flush of Heat, Dust and Harsh Winds.
Magnolia Balm instantly applied—gives a Ravishing Beauty.
Magnolia Balm instantly used on Face, Neck, Arms and Hands
Magnolia Balm gave me this Ravishing Beauty
Magnolia Balm dispels all Unsightly Spots.
Magnolia Balm gives an Alabaster Face, Neck, Arms and Hands.
Magnolia Balm—marvelous for Face Neck, Arms and Hands
Magnolia Balm Insures a Perfect Complexion
Magnolia Balm instantly used on Face, Neck, Arms and Hands.
Magnolia Balm take it with you to the Mountain Resorts.
Magnolia Balm restores Youthful Beauty to Faded Cheeks.

Tennis. Boating. Riding.

YOUNG LADIES SHOULD WEAR

GOOD SENSE CORSET WAISTS

Permit Full Expansion of Lungs.
Perfect Freedom of Motion.

SOLD BY ALL LEADING STORES. Send for Circular.

FERRIS BROS. Manufacturers, NEW YORK.

MARSHALL FIELD & CO., CHICAGO,
Wholesale Western Agents.

A New Book by MAX O'RELL, author of "John Bull and His Island," etc., etc.

JOHN BULL, JUNIOR; or, French as She is Traduced.

With an introduction by George Cary Eggleston; 1 vol., 16mo, boards, flexible, new style, 50 cents; cloth, gilt top (unique), $1.00.

Uniform with "King Solomon's Mines," etc.

DEAD MAN'S ROCK.

A Romance. By "Q." Cloth, 352 pages, price 75 cents; paper, 25 cents.

To any one who can enjoy an adventure of breathless interest, written in vivid stirring, picturesque style, thorough enjoyment is in store.

A QUEER RACE.

A Story of Adventure. By W. Westall, author of "The Phantom City." 320 pages, crown 8vo, cloth, 75 cents; paper, 25 cents.

Now Ready. { Complete Descriptive Catalogues of our Publications are now ready, and will be sent free to any address on application. SEND FOR IT NOW. } **Sent Free**

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

CASSELL'S NATIONAL LIBRARY.

EDITED BY PROF. HENRY MORLEY, LL.D.

A series of weekly volumes, each containing about 200 pages, clear, readable print, on good paper, at the low price of

TEN CENTS PER VOLUME.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE PER YEAR (52 NUMBERS) $5.00.

ALSO IN CLOTH EXTRA. PRICE, 25 CTS. PER VOLUME.

67—Natural History of Selborne. Vol. I.	REV. G. WHITE, A.M.
68—The Angel in the House.	COVENTRY PATMORE.
69—Murder as a Fine Art.—The English Mail-Coach.	THOMAS DE QUINCEY.
70—Natural History of Selborne. Vol. II.	REV. G. WHITE, A.M.
71—Trips to the Moon.	LUCIAN.
72—Lives of Cato the Younger, Agis, Cleomenes, and The Gracchi.	PLUTARCH.
73—Julius Cæsar.	WM. SHAKESPEARE.
74—Diary of Samuel Pepys. 1664-1665.	
75—Essay on Man.	ALEXANDER POPE.
76—A Tour in Ireland.	ARTHUR YOUNG.
77—History of New York. Vol. I.	WASHINGTON IRVING.
78—History of New York. Vol. II.	WASHINGTON IRVING.
79—A Midsummer-Night's Dream.	SHAKESPEARE.
80—The Banquet of Plato.	SHELLEY.
81—A Voyage to Lisbon.	HENRY FIELDING.
82—My Beautiful Lady.—Nelly Dale.	THOMAS WOOLNER, R. A.
83—Travels in the Interior of Africa. Vol. I.	MUNGO PARK.
84—Travels in the Interior of Africa. Vol. II.	MUNGO PARK.
85—The Temple.	GEORGE HERBERT.
86—The Diary of Samuel Pepys.—1666.	
87—King Henry VIII.	WM. SHAKESPEARE.
88—An Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful.	EDMUND BURKE.
89—Lives of Timoleon, Paulus Æmelius, Lysander and Sylla.	PLUTARCH.
90—Warren Hastings.	LORD MACAULAY.
91—Endymion and Other Poems.	JOHN KEATS.
92—Voyage to Abyssinia.	FATHER JEROME LOBO.
93—Human Nature and Other Sermons.	JOSEPH BUTLER.
94—Sintram and His Companions. Aslauga's Knight.	LA MOTTE FOUQUE.
95—Diary of Samuel Pepys.—1666-1667.	
96—Life and Death of King John.	WM. SHAKESPEARE.
97—History of the Caliph Vathek.	WM. BECKFORD.
98—Poems.	JOHN DRYDEN.
99—Colloquies on Society.	ROBERT SOUTHEY.
100—Lives of Agesilaus, Pompey & Phocion.	PLUTARCH.
101—Winter's Tale.	WM. SHAKESPEARE.
102—The Table Talk.	JOHN SELDEN.
103—Diary of Samuel Pepys, 1667.	
104—An Essay Upon Projects.	DANIEL DEFOE.
105—Cricket on the Hearth, etc.	CHAS. DICKENS.
106—Anecdotes of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.	HESTHER LYNCH PIOZZI.
107—Solon, Publicola, Philopœmen, etc.	PLUTARCH.
108—Prometheus Unbound, with Adonais, The Cloud, Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, and An exhortation.	PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.
109—The Republic of the Future.	ANNA BOWMAN DODD.
110—King Lear.	WM. SHAKESPEARE.
111—Seven Discourses on Art.	SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS,
112—Early History of James Second.	CHAS. JAMES FOX.
113—Diary of Samuel Pepys.—1667-1668.	
114—London in 1731.	DON MANOEL GONZALES.
115—Apology of the Church of England.	JOHN JEWELL.
116—Much Ado about Nothing.	WM. SHAKESPEARE.
117—Sketches of Persia, Vol. I.	SIR JOHN MALCOLM.
118—Shepherds' Calendar.	EDMUND SPENSER.
119—The Black Death. The Dancing Mania.	
120—Sketches of Persia. Vol. II.	SIR JOHN MALCOLM.
121—Diary of Samuel Pepys.—1668.	
122—Coriolanus.	WM. SHAKESPEARE.
123—Areopagitica.	JOHN MILTON.

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited,

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

FOR SUMMER READING.

THE COMMON CHORD.

A Story of the Ninth Ward. By HENRY R. ELLIOT, Author of "The Bassett Claim." One Volume, 12mo, Extra cloth, $1.00.

A well known critic says of it, "Piquant, very original and deeply interesting."

THE WHOLE TRUTH.

A Novel. By J. H. CHADWICK. 1 vol., 12mo, extra cloth. Price, $1.00.

"The style is crisp and unaffected, and the author holds the reader's attention to the end."

THE TRAGEDY OF BRINK-WATER.

A Novel. By MARTHA LIVINGSTON MOODEY. One Volume, 16mo, extra cloth. Price, $1.00.

"Strong in conception, vigorous in style—a story that will interest young and old alike—each detail developes until the climax is reached, and the mystery of *The Tragedy of Brinkwater* is revealed.

"A Powerful Novel of New York Life."

TWO GENTLEMEN OF GOTHAM.

1 Vol., 16mo, extra cloth. Price, $1 00.

"A work certain to attract unusual attention by its brilliant pen pictures of New York scenes and its clever handling of New York people. The authors are two men well known about town, who paint scenes they have looked on in a way that at once shows a knowledge of them."

COMPLETE CATALOGUE SENT FREE ON APPLICATION.

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited,

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

THE BYRNES—HAWTHORNE SERIES.

FROM THE DIARY OF INSPECTOR BYRNES.

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

I.

A TRAGIC MYSTERY.

II.

THE GREAT BANK ROBBERY.

III.

AN AMERICAN PENMAN.

IV.

SECTION 558;

OR,

THE FATAL LETTER.

PAPER 50 CENTS. - - CLOTH, $1.00

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED
104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

AS IT WAS WRITTEN.

A Jewish Musician's Story.

By Sidney Luska.

---

1 Volume 16mo. Extra Cloth. Price, - - - - $1.00.

Paper, 25 Cents.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"As it was Written is certainly a work of no common sort. It is full of passion and virile struggle, and will make its mark."—George Cary Eggleston.

"Its intensity, picturesqueness and exciting narration are in sharp contrast with the works of our analytic novelists."—E. C. Stedman.

"It is safe to say that few readers who have perused the first chapter, will be content to lay the book down without finishing it."—*Christian Union*, New York.

"The working out of so strange and abnormal a plot without any descent into mere grotesqueness is a triumph of art."—*New York Tribune.*

"It is vivid without floridness, dreamy without sentiment, exciting without being sensational."—*The Critic*, New York.

"We can earnestly advise all readers who care for a novel showing individuality, power and thought, to read As it was Written."—*Brooklyn Union.*

"To Sidney Luska we owe a debt of gratitude for charming us with a powerful story."—*Jewish Messenger*, New York.

"The book is certain to be read with interest, and to raise at least its little ripple of talk and criticism as being out of the common run of the works of the day.—*Boston Courier.*

"A capital novel. . . . It cannot fail to impress itself as an able and moving dramatic effort."—*New York Times.*

"The wearied reader of fiction who opens this book has in store for himself a genuine sensation."—*Palladium*, New Haven.

"Of all the novels that have come to us this season, As it was Written seems the most likely to take a permanent place in literature. We hope to hear from Sidney Luska again."—*Yale Courant.*

"A remarkable prose composition, created out of intense feeling and imagination, and powerfully affecting those of others, and bears the mark of genius."—*Boston Globe.*

"We have seen no book of late years to which the term absorbing in interest could more appropriately be applied."—*Boston Herald.*

"One of the most powerful novels of the year."—*St. Louis Republican.*

"It stands apart from the average novel, soon invites attention and then rivets it. . . . Will doubtless be extensively read."—*New York Telegram.*

"A work of thrilling interest that exercises an enthralling influence over the imagination. For sustained power it occupies an unique position among the novels of the year."—*Daily Chronicle.*

FOR SALE BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited.

104 & 106 Fourth Avenue, New York.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AS IT WAS WRITTEN."

MRS. PEIXADA.

By SIDNEY LUSKA. 1 vol., 16mo. Price, $1,00. Paper, 25 Cents

"The story begins with the very first page, and there is no let up till the end is reached. Mr. Luska has the happy faculty of holding his readers' attention through every page of his books. 'Mrs. Peixada' is a sensational story, the plot of which is most ingeniously worked out, and the end is as great a surprise to the reader as it was to those who were searching for the murderer of Mr. Peixada. Mr. Luska's style is so different from that of the modern novelist that he has his field almost entirely to himself, and he is working it with all the skill of a good husbandman."

RUHAINAH.

A Story of Afghan Life. By EVAN STANTON. 1 vol., 16mo, extra cloth. Price, $1.00. Paper, 25 Cents.

"This new romance of Afghan life is by a new novelist but an old writer, who has spent several years among the people whom he describes in such vivid colors."

Almost every incident in the narrative is founded on fact; and the li tle volume, while it contains an exciting love-story, full of the most graphic incidents, gives the most trustworthy details of the religion, the manners, and the social customs of that remarkable race who, in the days of Mahmud of Ghuznee, conquered Hindustan, and who, in more recent times, have so successfully resisted the invading armies of Great Britain. A people who, believing themselves to be the children of Israel, and possessing, as they do, the vigor and prowess of a manly race, are in the opinion of the author yet destined to play an important part in the world's history.

THE VICAR'S PEOPLE.

By G. MANVILLE FENN, author of 'Sweet Mace," "Poverty Corner," "The Parson o' Dumford," &c., &c. 1 vol., 12mo, extra cloth (new style). Price, $1.00.

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited,

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

"'THE BAR-SINISTER' SHOULD DO FOR MORMONISM WHAT 'UNCLE TOM'S CABIN DID FOR SLAVERY."—*Newport News.*

THE BAR-SINISTER,

A Social Study.

---

1 VOLUME, 12MO., 360 PAGES, EXTRA CLOTH. PRICE, - $1.25

PAPER, 50 CENTS.

"It is not saying too much to declare that THE BAR-SINISTER deserves to rank among the very few good American novels of an unusually unproductive season." *Christian Union.*

"THE BAR-SINISTER is a novel which will attract more than ordinary attention. The text is Mormonism, the bar-sinister on the escutcheon of this great republic. The characters introduced are every-day people. The hero, a New York business man, who goes to Salt Lake City with his wife and baby, and who falls a victim to the enticements of the 'saints.'"—*Christian at Work.*

"A well-constructed story, that is developed by a plot to a strong finale, in good literary form and with a pleasing literary style, and that will be read with the greatest interest and feeling—indeed, it has the power to inflame public opinion as no other book with its purpose has ever done."—*Boston Globe.*

"One of the most powerfully written books of the season.—*Lawrence American.*

"It is the best novel of the summer."—*Examiner*, New York.

"It is a powerful book, written with great force and earnestness, and in a picturesque style that vigorously emphasizes the scenes and characters amid which the story moves. It is not at all sensational, but is, nevertheless, marked by strong dramatic interest and a frank and sincere sympathy for those who suffer under the iniquities of Mormon rule."—*Boston Gazette.*

"THE BAR-SINISTER is certain to leave an impression, and a profound impression wherever it is read. It may do more; it may, if its success is at all commensurate with its power, strike a telling blow at the evil in Utah."—*Brooklyn Daily Times.*

"The story is so interesting that when once begun it is not willingly relinquished until the end of the book is reached. As 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' played its part in the abolition of slavery, so will stories like THE BAR-SINISTER aid in settling the Mormon question."—*San Francisco Daily Report.*

"A masterly hand has been at work on these pages and the author knows whereof they write."—*Baltimore Christian Observer.*

FOR SALE BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

"A Real Literary Gem."—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

AT LOVE'S EXTREMES.

BY MAURICE THOMPSON,

Author of "A Tallahasse Girl," "Songs of Fair Weather," etc

---

1 VOL., 12mo., CLOTH. PRICE - - - $1.00.

The scene of the story is laid in the mountains of Alabama; it is a thoroughly American tale, as strong as it is picturesque.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

The story is a very strong one, with picturesque sketching, effective dramatic situations, and most admirable character drawing.—*Boston Home Journal.*

The interest is sustained to the close, and the reader is little likely to lay the book down unfinished.—*Boston Courier.*

It is bright with descriptions of scenes, and spicy with mountaineer dialect. . . . The style is charming and this new work of fiction will be read widely and with pleasure.—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

There is an undertone to the book that is indescribably charming.—*Hartford Evening Post.*

A delightful story, elegantly designed, and told in the most interesting manner.—*Press, Albany.*

Crisp and fresh in style, and the story is told with animation.—*Brooklyn Daily Times.*

The attractive setting, the general color, and the excellence of parts of the action make the novel a very strong one.—*Boston Globe.*

Its delineations of characters are masterpieces . . . and the interest is so well sustained that one is reluctant to lay aside the book until it is finished.—*Portland Globe.*

The author has blended the beautiful and romantic in graceful thought which charms and entertains the reader.—*Southern Agriculturist.*

There is no more graceful writer in the country than Mr. Thompson. The word elegance fitly describes his style, and whenever he turns out a piece of literary work it is always complete. Each sentence is finely polished and every chapter thoroughly finished. In the present volume he deals with life in the mountains of Alabama, and describes most happily its people and scenery. His story is unconventional and well told.—*Baltimore American.*

"At Love's Extremes" is full of passionate fire and human nature under the influence of intense feeling.—*Troy Daily Times.*

FOR SALE BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited

104 & 106 Fourth Avenue, New York.

"THE FIRST ENGLISH MEMOIR WORTHY OF THE NAME."—*London Times.*

PRINCE BISMARCK.

AN HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY.

By CHARLES LOWE, M. A.

With introduction by Prof. MUNROE SMITH, of Columbia College, New York.

In two large Octavo Volumes, over 1,300 pages, with Portraits, complete Index and Appendix, giving the complete text of the Treaty of Vienna (1864), Convention of Gastein (1865), Treaty of Prague (1866), Treaty of Frankfort (1871), The Prussian Constitution, The Imperial Constitution, etc., etc.

Extra Cloth, Price, per Set, - - - - $5.00

"Mr. Lowe has written an able account of a great career, and his book is full of information, either personal or political, from the first page to the last.—*London Morning Post.*

"The first complete historical sketch of the great German statesman, who will occupy so conspicuous a place in the annals of the nineteenth century. . . . Of permanent value to the correct and intelligent apprehension of the political history of Europe."—*Liverpool Mercury.*

"Mr. Lowe does much towards enabling us to realize Prince Bismarck in his habit as he lives. His portrait of this towering European, this "Unique One," is carefully drawn, and as we note the indomitable energy and the unswerving purpose and the iron will of the great unifier of the German Fatherland—qualities perpetually in evidence through the whole of his extraordinary and dazzling career—we no longer wonder at the facility with which he surmounted obstacles apparently insuperable, and kept steadily on his path until the great dream of his life was realized in a powerful and united Germany.—*London Times.*

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited,

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BAR SINISTER."

WITHOUT BLEMISH.

TO-DAY'S PROBLEM. By MRS. J. H. WALWORTH. 1 vol., 12mo, Extra cloth. Price, $1.25. Paper, 50 Cents.

"The author in this volume deals with a vital subject. While her book has a moral purpose, it is not a dry dissertation, but is full of dramatic action and thrilling incident."

"It takes up one of the social problems of the day, and is well and thoughtfully written. The writer has lived in the South among the scenes she depicts, and so they are life-like and vivid."—*The Keynote.*

ADAM HEPBURN'S VOW.

A Tale of Kirk and Covenant. By ANNIE S. SWAN. 12mo, extra cloth. Price, $1.00. Paper, 25 Cents.

"The scene of this story is laid during the stirring times of the Scottish Covenanters, and holds the attention of the reader from the first chapter to the end."

BY FIRE AND SWORD.

A Story of the Huguenots. By THOMAS ARCHER. 1 vol., 12mo, extra cloth. Price, 1.00. Paper, 25 Cents.

NO. XIII.; Or, THE STORY of the LOST VESTAL.

A Tale of the early Christian days. By EMMA MARSHALL. 1 vol., 12mo, extra cloth. Price, $1.00. Paper, 25 Cents.

"Emma Marshall counts her readers by the thousands. Ancient Rome is the scene of the story, and the ancient Romans are the dramatis personæ."

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited,

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

TWO NEW NOVELS.

SWEET MACE

A SUSSEX LEGEND of the IRON TIMES.

By G. MANVILLE FENN.

1 Vol. 12mo. Cloth, New Style. $1.00.

"In point of style Mr. Fenn's writing is far above the average of writers of fiction."—*Daily News.*

"We believe that not many who read the first chapter of 'Sweet Mace' will lay it aside until they have read the last."—*Spectator.*

"Sweet Mace" is, we think, the best of Mr. Fenn's fictions hitherto. . . . The scene is laid in a period, and under conditions more appropriate to adventures than those of recent times. The novel is a romance, in which truth of coloring is aimed at, and successfully, in preference to probability—not that there is, under the circumstances of time and place, any obvious breach of the latter. . . . The whole is written with unflagging spirit, while the descriptive portions are full of peculiar charm."—*Globe.*

THE OLD FACTORY.

A LANCASHIRE STORY.

By WILLIAM WESTALL,

Author of "RED RYVINGTON," etc., etc.

1 Vol. 12mo. Cloth, New Style. Price. $1.00.

Mr. Westall writes of the manufacturing districts with knowledge, and in his hands the rough Lancashire folk, and the grimy purlieus of the cotton towns lend themselves, not unpicturesquely, to the needs of fiction. In "The Old Factory" we have 382 pages of closely set and intensely interesting matter, in which the author has ample scope to display his liking for incident and adventure, an opportunity that he has taken advantage of, and given us one of the most readable novels of the season.

FOR SALE BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited.

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

CASSELL'S RAINBOW SERIES

OF NEW AND ORIGINAL NOVELS.

BY POPULAR AMERICAN AND FOREIGN AUTHORS.

IN LARGE 12MO. ELEGANTLY PRINTED ON GOOD PAPER AND BOUND IN PAPER COVER.

PRICE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS PER VOLUME.

NOW READY.

1. **NATASQUA.** By Mrs. Rebecca Harding Davis.
2. **WITNESS MY HAND.** A Fernshire Story.
3. **AS IT WAS WRITTEN.** By Sydney Luska.
4. **WHO IS GUILTY?** By Philip Woolf, M.D.
5. **OUR SENSATION NOVEL.** Edited by J. H. McCarthy, M. P.
6. **DEAD MAN'S ROCK.** By Q.
7. **A QUEER RACE.** By Wm. Westall.
8. **CALAMITY JANE.** By Mrs. G. E. Spencer.
9. **A PRINCE OF DARKNESS.** By Florence Warden.
10. **SCRUPLES.** By Mrs. J. H. Walworth.
11. **MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES.** By E. A. Hornibrook.
12. **OLD FULKERSON'S CLERK.** By Mrs. J. H. Walworth.
13. **KING SOLOMON'S MINES.** By H. Rider Haggard.
14. **A MORAL SINNER.** By M. N. Daly.
15. **ADAM HEPBURN'S VOW.** By Annie S. Swan.
16. **MORGAN'S HORROR.** By George Manville Fenn.
17. **BY FIRE AND SWORD.** By Thomas Archer.
18. **THE PHANTOM CITY.** By William Westall.
19. **No. XIII; or, The Lost Vestal.** By Emma Marshall.
20. **A CRIMSON STAIN.** By Annie Bradshaw.
21. **WANTED—A SENSATION.** By Edward S. Van Zile.
22. **MRS. PEIXADA.** By Sydney Luska.
23. **JOHN PARMELEE'S CURSE.** By Julian Hawthorne.

OTHER VOLUMES IN PREPARATION.

CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited,

104 & 106 Fourth Avenue, New York.

CASSELL'S SUNSHINE SERIES

—OF—

CHOICE COPYRIGHT FICTION.

A Series of 12mo Volumes, Issued Weekly.

Price, Illuminated Paper Covers, - 50 Cents Each.

Or in Extra Cloth, $1.00 per Volume.

The Veiled Beyond. By S. B. Alexander.

Orion, The Gold Beater. By Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.

The Bar Sinister. By Mrs. J. H. Walworth.

Two Men. By Elizabeth Stoddard.

As Common Mortals.

No. 19 State Street. By David G. Adee.

Madam Silva and The Ghost of Dred Tower.

By M. G. McClelland.

Without Blemish. By Mrs. J. H. Walworth.

Brown Stone Boy and other Queer People.

By W. Henry Bishop.

A Plucky One. By Mrs. Geo. E. Spencer.

Another's Crime; from the Diary of Inspector Byrnes.

By Julian Hawthorne.

Bewitched. By Louis Pendleton.

New Man at Rossmere. By Mrs. J. H. Walworth.

Two Gentlemen of Gotham. By C. & C.

A Banker of Bankersville. By Maurice Thompson

The Tragedy of Brinkwater.

By Martha Livingston Moody

OTHER VOLUMES IN PREPARATION.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED,

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

PERFORATED PAPER.

Price Reduced 50 per cent.

This Fixture Heavily Plated

—AND—

Four 1000-Sheet Rolls

BEST STANDARD BRAND

(Not Medicated)

DELIVERED FREE

Anywhere in the United States on receipt of

ONE DOLLAR.

eight packages and pocket-case for $1 enclosed.

My physician recommends your Medicated Paper, and I enclose $1 for eight packets with pocket-case.

NEW YORK, April 18, 1885.

Your Medicated Paper has been used with most gratifying result. It is a splendid remedy and has my unqualified endorsement. Please send two 1000-sheet rolls.

NEW HARTFORD, IOWA, Aug. 11, 1887.

We cannot do without your Medicated Paper. Send two dollars worth at once.

OUR MEDICATED PAPER

Heavily charged with an ointment approved by the profession, offers a method of treatment free from the inconvenience and annoyance attending the use of other remedies. The itching type of the disease quickly yields to its influence.

We submit a few extracts from the many letters we receive as to the value of our Medicated Paper. The originals may be seen at our office.

31 SOMERSET ST., BOSTON, MASS., July 1, 1885.

A. P. W. PAPER CO.

GENTLEMEN: Your Medicated Toilet Paper is useful in the treatment of Anal diseases, allaying to a great extent the intense itching; it is a remedy easily applied, and a trial is convincing of its merits.

F. M. JOHNSON, M.D.

NORRISTOWN, PA., Dec. 15, 1886.

A. P. W. PAPER CO.

GENTLEMEN: Having recommended your Medicated Paper to a number of my patients suffering from Hemorrhoids, I find it of great benefit in preventing the intense itching, and in some cases has made a permanent cure.

FROM A PHYSICIAN.—I am much pleased with your sample of Medicated Paper. Please send me

NEWBURGH, May 17, 1886.

Pocket Packet,	$0 10
Price per Roll of 1000 Sheets securely wrapped in Tin Foil,	0 50
Eight Packets and Neat Pocket Case,	1 00
Two 1000-Sheet Rolls and Nickel Fixture,	1 30

Delivered Free, anywhere in the United States, on receipt of price. Address

Albany Perforated Wrapping Paper Co., Albany, N. Y.

CHICAGO AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

OVER 7,000 MILES

OF

FIRST-CLASS RAILROAD

Penetrating the most attractive portions of

Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Dakota, Nebraska and Wyoming.

THE DIRECT ROUTE

FOR

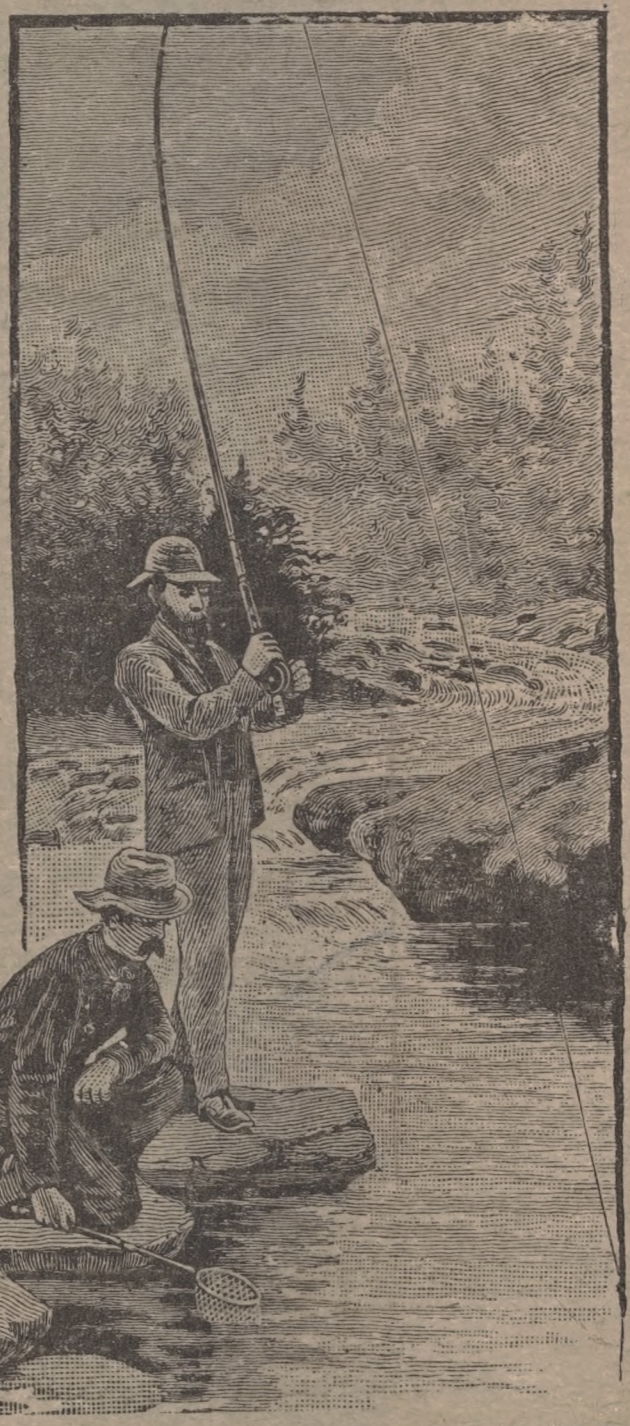
Tourists AND Sportsmen

TO

Milwaukee, Waukesha, Madison, Neenah and Menasha, Green Lake, Marquette, Lake Geneva, Fox Lake, Devil's Lake.

St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, Ashland, Lake Minnetonka, Yellowstone National Park.

Council Bluffs, Omaha, Denver and the Mountains of Colorado, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Colton, San Diego, Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, Victoria, Vancouver and all California, Alaska and Pacific Coast Points.



ITS

Train Service,

Consisting of

THROUGH FAST TRAINS

Between **CHICAGO** and destinations, is carefully arranged to meet the requirements of Through and Local Travel, and its equipment of new and superb **SLEEPING CARS, PALATIAL DINING CARS** and **ELEGANT PARLOR CARS AND COACHES** is such as to command the patronage of the best class of travelers. It is the **ONLY LINE** to the **BLACK HILLS.**

Rates, Maps, and all information furnished on application to any Ticket Agent, or to the General Passenger Agent, at Chicago.

J. M. WHITMAN,
General Manager.

H. C. WICKER,
Traffic Manager.

E. P. WILSON,
General Passenger Agent.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00021679884